AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

BOOK OF DANIEL:

WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

BY

THE REV. WILLIAM RAMSAY,

CRIEFF.

EDINBURGH:

THOMAS GRANT, 21 GEORGE STREET.

LONDON: HOULSTON & STONEMAN.

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PREFACE.

THE inspired predictions of God's Word form a very important and deeply interesting part of Divine Revelation; and to every contemplative mind the study of them, in connexion with the great works of God, must afford both pleasure and advantage. We have little sympathy with the idea entertained by some, that inspired prophecy is so deeply mysterious, and its meaning so far beyond our reach, that the attempt to study or expound it is presumption. Undoubtedly, if God has revealed his purposes to his Church, or foretold the events of his grace or of his providence, it must have been for the purpose of these being read, and studied, and turned to practical account. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein." It is the solemn injunction of Him who is both the author and subject of Divine Revelation—"Search the Scriptures;" and surely the prophecies are not excepted: for again

says the same glorious Author—"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy." And if ever there was a time in the history of our world, since Christ ascended to his glory, in which it was incumbent upon the people of God to obey that injunction of the Redeemer, and in which the deep-toned voice of his Providence is loudly calling to this exercise, that time is the present. If there is meaning in the predictions of God's Word, or in the aspect of his providence, we in the present day are entering upon a scene, whose events shall fill the world with astonishment and awe. We are treading upon the threshold of events at which the ears of every one that hears of them shall tingle. A crisis is evidently approaching of vast importance both to the Church and to the world, the certainty, the signs, the incidents, and the consequences of which are graphically described in the pages of prophecy.

In the prediction of events which refer to the gospel dispensation, the Book of Daniel occupies a very prominent position, and to every student of prophecy must furnish a rich field for contemplation at the present time. While it contains in it the thrilling narrative, in which are exhibited the most exalted as well as the most humiliating views of human character—the grandeur and sublimity of

genuine religion, contrasted with the hatefulness of human pride—the meanness of envy, of cruelty, and of treachery—its pages are enriched with some of the most sublime and illustrious predictions regarding the Messiah, and the future glory of his reign. The first division of the book, from the beginning to the close of the sixth chapter, is chiefly historical, and contains an account of a variety of events that happened to Daniel and to his people under several of the kings of Babylon; and also an account of a remarkable prediction, which was given to one of these kings—Nebuchadnezzar—in a dream. The second division of the book is strictly prophetical, and comprises the visions and prophecies with which Daniel was favoured in the land of his captivity, relating to the four great monarchies of the world, to the advent and work of Messiah, to the rise and reign of Antichrist, and to the extension, prosperity, and glory of the Church to the latest ages of her existence in the world.

Of all the Old Testament prophets, Daniel is the most distinct in the order of time, and in many things, perhaps, the easiest to be understood. In matters that relate to the last times, he is acknowledged to be the key to all the ancient prophets; and in his predictions concerning the advent and

work of Messiah, and concerning some other events of times far remote from those in which he lived, he is so clear and explicit, that Porphyry, a learned adversary of Christianity in the third century, finding the fulfilment of some of Daniel's predictions so universally acknowledged, that he could not disprove the fact of their accomplishment, alleged against them that they must have been written after the events to which they refer had actually occurred;—thus unintentionally affording, as Jerome remarks, the strongest testimony to their truth.

Regarding the authenticity of the Book of Daniel as a part of the canon of Scripture, we reckon it unnecessary to make any remark. The objections brought against it by some—as well as against other parts of Scripture—have been found, when examined, to be so untenable that the intelligent reader would reckon it a waste of time to notice them in a publication of this kind. Those who wish to see such objections ably and successfully refuted have only to consult that work of learning, research, and sound reasoning, lately published for "The Continental Translation Society," Dr Hengstenberg's Dissertations on the Genuineness of Daniel.

Every one whose attention is directed to the

study of Scripture prediction will observe the striking similarity that there is between many of the prophecies of Daniel and those of John in the Book of Revelation. Both prophets seem to have been led over the same field, and to have had the same scenes, with a little variation, presented to their view. To both these prophets Antichrist appears rising, and reigning, and falling in connexion with the fourth great monarchy of the world—the Roman Empire. And the Church of Christ is seen by them suffering persecution by this horrid Antichristian system, during the long period of "a time, times, and the dividing of time;" but afterward delivered, extended, and glorified by Messiah, the Prince of Peace. And great light is cast upon both prophecies by comparing the one with the other. Antichrist appears to Daniel rising up among the kingdoms of the fourth monarchy, in the form of "a little horn," with stout look and language of arrogance and blasphemy; while to John he appears swelled into a monster, speaking with the same accent, but covered with the names of blasphemy, and the dragon gives him his power, and his seat, and great authority. In a subsequent vision he appears again to Daniel in the symbolic form of a little horn, among the *Grecian*

kingdoms, prefiguring one of the Persian monarchs, who, in his character and deeds, was the symbol of the Antichristian system. Regarding *this* little horn there have been different opinions. Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, and Dr Hales understand it to mean *the Roman temporal power;* but it is difficult to conceive how the Roman power, the fourth great monarchy of the world, could arise out of the four Grecian kingdoms, as was the case with this little horn. In accordance with the view of many, both Jewish and Christian commentators, we understand it to symbolize the Persian monarch, Antiochus Epiphanes, the great persecutor of God's ancient people, and who is by the angel described as "a vile person," whose character and conduct mark him out as a fit symbol of Antichrist, whose desolating abomination in the New Testament Church was prefigured, first, by Antiochus profaning the Temple, and afterward by the Roman army laying it waste in the destruction of Jerusalem. But be this as it may, both prophets, Daniel and John, foretell his overthrow, and the consequent glory of the Church of Christ. And their predictions, in connexion with the present aspect of God's providence, evidently show that this sublime and important event is approaching,

and is at no great distance. The waters of the mystical Euphrates are drying up under the scorching contents of the vial of the sixth angel; "these peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, where the whore sitteth," disgusted with her abominations, are drawing off, and turning away from the system, and threatening to leave the Euphratean channel dry. The three unclean spirits like frogs—from whose deluding divinations long may Britain's Sovereign and her Government be preserved—seem to have gone forth on their tour among "the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." (Rev. xvi.) And amid the combination of despotism and oppression, civil and ecclesiastical, the mustering of armies, and the indifference and blindness of a careless world, Christ's warning voice is heard—"Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Is this not the time, then, when every true patriot and every genuine Christian ought to study the Word of God, and mark the signs of his providence? They were the wise men of Issachar "who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."

EXPOSITION

OF THE

BOOK OF DANIEL.

CHAPTER I.

VERSES 1, 2.—"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his god."

THE Book of Daniel contains, perhaps, some of the most interesting historical events, and remarkable predictions, that are to be found in any of the writings of the ancient prophets. This prophet lived during the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon, and was a witness, and to some extent a partaker, of God's chastisement upon his ancient people, for their propensity to idolatry; for we find him numbered among the captives of the royal family and tribe of Judah. He was contemporary with the prophet Ezekiel, although much younger, and, like him, was employed by God to foretell Israel's de-

liverance and the future glory of the Church; and so clear was his vision of futurity that he could speak, with almost historical precision, of the advent, the work, and the sufferings of Messiah, and the glory that should follow. He was a man of consummate wisdom and eminent piety. In his wisdom he not only excelled the sages of Chaldea, but even the learned prince of Tyrus, who proudly assumed divine honours, is referred to it by the God of heaven, as a fit standard of comparison. (Ezek. xxviii.) And so eminent was he in prayer, that he is classed with men—Noah and Job—who of all others had the greatest interest in heaven. (Ezek. xiv. 14.) In the courts and councils of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius, he lived a long and active life, both as a courtier, a statesman, and a man of business; which shows that worldly business forms no excuse for the neglect of true religion, and cannot be pled as a reason for giving up our intimacy with God.

Part of this Book is historical, and contains an account of the siege of Jerusalem and Israel's captivity, and of some events of thrilling interest during the time they remained in Babylon; and part of it is prophetical, in which are depicted, not only God's dispensations towards his Church in ancient times, but also her history, and God's dealings with her to latest ages.

It must be acknowledged by every intelligent expositor of these prophecies, that, while they are deeply interesting, there are some parts of them difficult and hard to be understood. Christ himself in Matt. xxiv., in referring to them, warns us of the difficulty: "Let him that readeth understand," says he. But while he reminds us of the difficulty, he intimates that the know-

ledge of them is practicable; and much more is this the case *now*, when, in the present dispensations of his providence, he is breaking open these seals which had "shut up the book, and sealed the words, even to the time of the end."

That part of the Book from the 4th verse of chap. ii. to the end of chap. vii. was originally written in the Chaldee language; all the rest of it is written in Hebrew.

This Book begins with the history of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah. This was the judgment of Heaven upon Judah and Jerusalem, on account of their idolatry, and on account of the innocent blood that was shed during Manasseh's wicked reign. This desolation was foretold by the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, and God brought it to pass according to the prediction. We are here informed that "the Lord gave the king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, and that this proud monarch was also permitted by Divine Providence to plunder the house of God, and to carry part of its sacred vessels into the land of Shinar, where they were placed in the treasure-house of his god. Thus, in the righteous and retributive justice of Heaven, the furniture of God's house, which Israel had profaned with their unhallowed services, was carried away, and cast into the house of an idol.

It would appear that this was the commencement of the seventy years' captivity of Israel in Babylon, and that exactly seventy years from that date the first return of the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem took place. But we have an account of another captivity

of Judah, under the reign of Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiachim, in which the king of Babylon carried away Jehoiachin, with all the princes and mighty men, and ten thousand captives, with all the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the king's house. And also of a third captivity, about nineteen years after the first, under the reign of Zedekiah, which completed the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of Israel. And in correspondence with these we find there were three returns of Israel from Babylon; and between each captivity and its corresponding return, there were exactly seventy years, so that seventy years was the general term for the duration of the captivity. It was in the first captivity that Daniel and his fellows were carried away to Babylon.

VERSES 3, 7.—"And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; children in whom *was* no blemish, but well-favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were, of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names; for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

We have in these verses an account of the manner in which the king of Babylon followed up his victory. He did not at first totally destroy Jerusalem, or carry Judah wholly away captive, but left a considerable portion of the inhabitants, with a king over them, as tributary to the king of Babylon. But he carried away many of the inhabitants, and among these several of the children of the royal family. These he carried to Babylon as trophies of his victory—as hostages, and as servants to himself. Hence he commands the master of his eunuchs to select from among the children of Israel and these Jewish princes, certain young men in whom was no blemish, but who were good looking—skilful in wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science—men whom he reckoned able and fit to be servants in his palace, and attend upon his person. These were to be instructed, not in the divination or in the religious worship of Babylon, but in the learning and language of the Chaldeans. In this part of Nebuchadnezzar's conduct there appears great wisdom and sound policy, while at the same time there is displayed a considerable amount of despotism and tyranny. It was sound policy in a young and rising monarch to have his palace filled with the wisest men for his attendants; but it was tyranny to make the princes of Judah his servants.

An order was given by the king that these young men should be nourished for three years with the provisions and luxuries, which in that country were esteemed the best—the same as were served up on the king's table. In this there was, no doubt, an instance of Nebuchadnezzar's kindness and generosity,

for the wine which he drank, and which was always used at the tables of monarchs in these days was of that kind called sweet wine, and was superior to all others. But his chief design was, that these young men might appear well fed and good looking when they stood before him.

Daniel and his three companions were among those who were carried to Babylon in the first captivity. They were of the tribe of Judah, and were probably descendants of the royal family of David.

It was the custom in the courts of Eastern monarchs to change the names of their servants, especially if these were taken in war, or brought from a foreign country; and the name given was generally significant of some supposed qualification possessed by the individual, or on account of some act performed by the person. Pharaoh called Joseph Zaphnath-paaneah—a revealer of secrets—because he had interpreted his dreams. According to this custom, the prince of the eunuchs changed the names of these four young men, who had been taken from the land of Judah. Doubtless this was intended to show his authority over them and their subjection to him, and also to show that they were expected to forget their own country, and consider themselves Chaldeans. It has been well remarked by some commentators that their original names had something of God in them, and that the new names imposed upon them were calculated, and perhaps designed, to make them forget the God of their fathers, and adopt the idolatrous practices of the heathen. Daniel means, *God is my judge*, or the judgment of God. Hananiah—*the grace of the Lord;* Mishael—*he who is the strong*

God, or my strong God; Azariah—*the Lord is a help*. But the names given to them savour somewhat of Chaldean idolatry. Belteshazzar—*the keeper of the hid treasures of Bel;* Shadrach—*a tender field*, or as some think, *the inspiration of the sun;* Meshach—a name of a heathen deity, supposed to be the goddess of force; some think that under this name Venus was worshipped; Abed-nego—*the servant of light*, or of the shining fire.

VERSES 8, 9.—"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs."

We find here that Daniel found favour in the eyes of the prince of the eunuchs, and that this was in consequence of God's special providence. When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him, and even to love him, and to show him favour. Thus we find Joseph favoured by the keeper of the prison in Egypt, and Daniel by the prince of the eunuchs in Babylon. But amid all the kindness and indulgence shown Daniel, he and his three companions resolved that they would not defile themselves with that portion of the king's meat or of the king's wine that was allowed them. From this it would appear, that they had conscientious scruples about partaking of this food—perhaps it was food which was forbidden in the law of God, which he gave to the

Jews, or it may have been food offered to an idol, or perhaps they reckoned it sinful to drink wine and live so luxuriously when Zion was in affliction and captivity, and the house of God lying waste. Whatever was the reason, they reckoned themselves defiled by partaking of the provision assigned them by the king. Daniel therefore requested for himself and his friends, that the prince of the eunuchs should not insist upon their receiving it.

VERSES 10–13.—"And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my Lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king. Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants."

This officer of the court objected to Daniel's proposal, under the fear of his responsibility to his master. That provision being assigned them, for the very purpose of improving their bodily strength and external appearance, he was afraid lest they should not appear so healthy or good looking as those who fed on these dainties, and if such should be the result, he knew that his life was in danger, and that his head would pay the penalty for tampering with the orders of the king.

Daniel then applies to Melzar, the under steward, and

proposes that a trial should be made, and that they should be fed on pulse and water for ten days, and at the end of which they should be compared with those who were fed on the king's provisions, and that they should be dealt with accordingly; that is, if they were as healthy and good looking, with their pulse and water, as the others were with the king's food, then the process should be continued, but if not, Melzar might insist upon their receiving the king's provision.

VERSES 14–16.—"So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

Melzar no doubt seeing the reasonableness of the proposal, and finding that no great danger could happen during the short time mentioned, consented to the proposal. And the trial being made, and comparing them with the children who did eat of the king's meat, found that their countenances were fairer and fatter than any of them. To whatever extent this effect might be ascribed to temperance, and the nourishing qualities of pulse—for that of most other grain is reckoned to contain the greatest proportion of nourishment;—yet we must not overlook the special blessing of God in this matter. To this, in a great degree, the nourishing effects of this plain provision must be ascribed. And there is little doubt but this abstemiousness and self-denial contributed to fit them for those trials and diffi-

culties, which they had afterwards to encounter in the land of their captivity. Melzar then took away the portion of their meat that was ordered by the king, and also their allowance of wine, and fed them with pulse.

VERSE 17.—"As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams."

We have here an account of the progress of these four young men in their education. They rapidly advanced in learning and wisdom, but this is especially ascribed to the blessing of Heaven. He gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and upon Daniel especially he bestowed the singular gift of understanding and interpreting dreams, not by certain rules of art, given by pretended diviners or soothsayers, but by supernatural sagacity and wisdom, communicated to him by the God of heaven. Hence we often find him, in the future part of his history, employed about dreams and visions, either interpreting them to others, or by means of these receiving notices of future events.

VERSES 18–21.—"Now, at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king in-

"quired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm. And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus."

At the time appointed by the king of Babylon, these men, along with others, were by his commandment brought into his presence for inspection and examination. And what is worthy of notice, they were examined by the king himself: "He communed with them," no doubt, regarding all kinds of useful knowledge. Very likely he himself was a man of learning; but he appears to have been a man of wise policy, for he would not trust the examination of these young men to any other, and the result was most satisfactory. He found them far superior to every other, not only to all those who had been studying along with them at the same time, but to all the wise men in his dominions; and that not merely in the Chaldean language, or in the magic and astrology of his magicians, but "in all matters of wisdom and understanding." Here we see the God of Israel, while he gave his own heritage into the hand of the despot of Babylon, pouring contempt on all the learning and magic of the Chaldeans. They were therefore admitted into the king's council, and to stand in his presence.

We have no account how long the rest occupied this high situation about the Court; but we find Daniel continued "unto the first year of Cyrus;" that is, he continued in the Court of the king of Babylon, until the monarchy of Babylon was overthrown by Cyrus the prince of Persia. Hence we find him warning Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, of his danger, on the

night of his death, after which we find him in the Court of Darius the Median.

From the narrative given in this chapter, we learn —1. That the sins even of God's own people provoke Him to bring severe judgments upon them. God's Israel, on account of their sins, were given into the hand of the proud enemy. 2. That even under severe judgment, or sharp chastisement, God in mercy keeps his eye upon his own people. He watches over them with care, and he gives them favour in the eyes of those that led them captive. 3. When God bestows gifts and natural talents, these ought to be cultivated. 4. It is the blessing of the Lord that insures success in the cultivation of talents, and insures prosperity.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1.—"And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him."

IN the account given of Daniel, in the preceding chapter, we are told that "he had understanding in all visions and dreams." In this chapter we find that an opportunity was soon offered for bringing his skill into operation. This chapter gives an account of a very remarkable history, but it is the history of a very important prophecy — a prophecy both extensive and comprehensive, and which relates to God's dealings with his church, to the latest period. The date of this remarkable occurrence is the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. But in this date we are met by a difficulty. How could this happen in the *second* year of his reign, when it was after Daniel and his fellows had stood before the king, subsequent to *three years'* training in Babylon? Some think that Daniel was taken into the king's palace in the second year of his education, and thus had an opportunity of interpreting this dream. Others, that "the second year of

the *reign* of Nebuchadnezzar" should be read—"In the second year in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar"—that is, in the second year, in which Daniel and his fellows were admitted into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar. Others are of opinion—as Hieronymus and Josephus, with whom Calvin seems to agree, and certainly with considerable plausibility—that this was the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign after his father's death, when he reigned alone; and after he had conquered Egypt, Judea, the Assyrians, Moabites, and other nations. In that year the king had a dream which troubled him.

"He dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." Many dreams come through the multitude of business, and the mind being so much engrossed with the affairs of life; but this was one of the various ways by which God, in ancient times, revealed his will to the prophets. "God speaketh in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men. Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction." Job xxxiii. 14-16. And although the time of such prophetic revelations of God's will is now past, and the canon of Scripture completed, yet we dare not say but God may still give certain intimations in dreams regarding our duty, in reference to that will which he has already revealed.

This dream of Nebuchadnezzar's, however, was of a prophetic nature, and was accompanied with such impressions upon his spirit as convinced him that it came from God. And his spirit was so troubled under these impressions that his sleep went from him. He was a

monarch whose power, and wealth, and royal splendour, and magnificence, surpassed every other that reigned in his day, and doubtless made him to be envied by the nations around him. But when we look into the deep recesses of that proud spirit, even lying on a bed of luxurious ease, we find him an object of pity. All the wealth of his kingdom, the splendour of his Court, and the power of his monarchy, could not procure him a few hours' sleep. He was a troubler of God's Israel, and the God of Israel troubled his spirit by a vision of the night.

VERSES 2–7.—"Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream. Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation. The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill: but if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards, and great honour: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof. They answered again, and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation of it."

It is a very striking circumstance, that, though his spirit was troubled and perplexed by the dream, the dream itself had escaped his memory. In this there is clearly discernible the hand of God at work, in preparing for the manifestation of his own glory, and the ex-

altation of his name among the heathen; and also for the advancement of Daniel in the court of Babylon, as he once did in Egypt for the advancement of Joseph. In order to have his dream recalled to memory and interpreted, he summoned into his presence all the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the learned Chaldeans in his kingdom, and "said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream." He told them that he had called them before him, in order that they might not only interpret his dream, but tell him the dream itself.

Having obeyed the summons, they answered him in the Syriac language, which at that time was the same as the Chaldean; and as formerly stated, this is the commencement of that portion of the book of Daniel which is written in the Chaldean language. These Chaldeans begin their reply, by expressing their loyalty and good wishes for the king: "O king, live for ever." This was the customary expression employed in the addresses or plaudits given to Eastern monarchs, as we often find in the history of the kings of Israel.* They

* A similar expression of loyalty we find in the plaudits given to many of the kings of Israel—Saul, Adonijah, Absalom, Solomon, ~~Joash~~ Josiah, &c.—but which in our translation of the Bible has been most unwarrantably rendered, "God save the king," and adopted as genuine Scripture into many of the addresses to kings in modern times. It may be proper to state here, that there is no such expression in all the Word of God as "God save the king." In every instance referred to, the words are, "Let the king live"—language sufficiently calculated to express the firmest attachment, and most devoted loyalty of subjects to their sovereign, without the risk of desecrating the sacred name of their Maker, in their addresses to an earthly king.

present to him a very reasonable request, "tell thy servants," say they, "the dream, and we will shew the interpretation," and we question much, whether, in their anxiety to bring the king to reason, they did not promise more than they were capable of performing. It is very questionable, if not altogether certain, that they would have failed in showing the interpretation, although the king had told them the dream; for we find in a subsequent part of their history, they were as unable to interpret what was written before their eyes, as they were at this time to discover the king's dream.

The king acknowledges that the dream had escaped his memory, and yet he most unreasonably demands of them, to tell him both the dream and the interpretation, and he even threatens them with death and desolation if they failed to fulfil his demand. They were to "be cut in pieces, and their houses made a dunghill."

Great honour and rewards were to be bestowed upon them by the king, if they would show the dream and its interpretation. Perhaps he suspected that they were acting dishonestly and wishing to conceal the matter from him, and he tries them both by promises and threatenings. And having done so, he might have seen that, had it been in their power, they would have complied with his request; but he still continues deaf to reason, and insists upon his demand. In all this, however, there is discernible the design of the God of infinite wisdom, in the dispensations of his providence, to confound the wisdom of the wise, and all the skill of Chaldea, as he did the magicians of Egypt, in the presence of Moses.

The magicians finding that the king's request was

altogether beyond their skill, and being convinced that reason was on their side, repeat their request, and insist upon the king telling them his dream, in order that they might be able to show him the interpretation.

VERSES 8, 9.—"The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me. But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but* one decree for you; for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can show me the interpretation thereof."

The king, as already noticed, suspects that they had combined to hide the matter from him; and he charges them with putting him off in order to gain time, and then the matter would be so completely obliterated from his memory, that they could invent any story they chose as a substitute for the dream, or perhaps something would occur, that would bring them out of their difficulty; and he charges them with having "prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before him till the time be changed"—that is, either until his earnest desire to know the dream might abate, or the thing be so completely forgotten, that any invention could pass for the dream. But he is resolved that they shall not thus escape, and he renews his demand. And he tells them farther, that the display of their skill in bringing the dream to his recollection, would be the best evidence of their ability to interpret it. By their telling him the dream, he was to know that they could show him the

interpretation. Failing that, they are informed that there was but one decree for them, and that decree had been already intimated.

VERSES 10–13.—"The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, there is not a man upon the earth, that can show the king's matter: therefore *there is* no king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth; and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh. For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain."

These pretended diviners appear to have had certain rules by which they judged of the meaning of dreams, and by which they pretended to interpret them, when the dreams were told to them; but they acknowledge that what the king required was beyond their skill, and they assert that it was beyond the power of any man on earth. They endeavour to turn his attention to the extraordinary nature of the request, in order to mitigate his demand. "It is a rare thing that the king requireth"—a thing required by no king, lord, nor ruler, of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. Kings and rulers have often made unreasonable requests, and sometimes have enforced them with unreasonable pains and penalties; but never had any king asked such an unreasonable thing as this. And they assure him, that none can satisfy his demand, or show him his dream, but supernatural power, whom they call "the gods,

whose dwelling is not with flesh." These Chaldeans were ignorant of the true God, and of the nature of his worship, and yet they acknowledged a superior power and intelligence. They were blinded idolaters who worshipped material idols, and yet they acknowledged that these spiritual intelligences could reveal this matter. So lamentably debasing and inconsistent is idolatry, that while the idolater acknowledges the existence and the superintendence of the gods that dwell not with flesh, he will yet fall down and worship the work of his own hands.

But although the reasoning of these men was just, and their reproof to the monarch before whom they stood was gentle and mild, it was not well received. It appears only to have exasperated his rage. His pride could brook nothing that savoured of dictation or reproof, and consequently he becomes furious. Proud passion is on the throne while reason is under foot. All the pleading of these embarrassed magicians was vain; and in his unbridled rage, the king commanded that every one of them should be destroyed. This doom, the result of ungovernable passion and of arbitrary power, went forth in the form of a decree; and so unrighteous and unreasonable was it, that even Daniel and his fellows were included in it, although they knew nothing of the matter, for "they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain." In this arbitrary and unrighteous decree of Nebuchadnezzar, we have perhaps one of the best specimens of cruel and undiluted tyranny—heedless of every dictate of reason, he casts around him firebrands, arrows, and death; and treats his loyal and sycophantic subjects as if they were

the rankest traitors. At the same time we see the manifestation of God's righteous judgment, against such presumptuous pretenders, in turning this unrighteous decree into an instrument of punishment, threatened to be inflicted upon these impostors.

VERSES 14, 15.—"Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon: he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, why *is* the decree *so* hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel."

It would appear that, in calling the magicians and Chaldeans together, in order to have his dream interpreted, the king had forgotten Daniel, although on a former occasion he had found him wiser than all his wise men. But this unaccountable circumstance was overruled in the providence of God, for magnifying his own wisdom, for elevating and increasing the character and influence of his servant Daniel, and for pouring contempt upon all the wisdom of the Chaldeans. But although the king had neglected to consult Daniel, that righteous man was, contrary to all law and justice, included in that unrighteous sentence, pronounced against the wise men. Daniel, as formerly noticed, was a man famed for his wisdom, for prudence, and for prayer; and in this part of his history we have these lovely features of his character developed in all their prominency. It would seem that he was ignorant of this whole matter, until notice was given him to prepare for execution. But his mind was not unhinged by the sudden shock of the intelligence, nor his temper

ruffled by the rude injustice of the sentence. He received the alarming tidings with all the calmness of conscious integrity, and with that dignified composure peculiar to the soul who feels itself elevated above the highest earthly throne. He answered the captain of the king's guard, who had received orders to put the decree into execution, "with counsel and wisdom." And in this answer, he first asks the reason why the decree is so hasty from the king? It is highly probable that, even at this time, Daniel was not aware of the reason of the sentence of death pronounced against them—that, without assigning any reason, or informing Daniel of the interview of the wise men with the king, Arioch at first had merely communicated the king's sentence or decree to Daniel; and thus Daniel naturally asks the reason of this hasty decree—Why, what evil have we done? What crime have we committed? Or what has so aroused the king's wrath, that his sentence is so hasty, without either indictment or trial? "Then," we are here informed, "Arioch made the thing known to Daniel." He informed him of the whole circumstances.

VERSES 16–18.—"Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would show the king the interpretation. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah his companions: that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning the secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon."

Daniel being made acquainted with all the circum-

stances of the case, and seeing the dangerous position in which both he and the wise men were placed, ventured into the presence of the offended monarch, and craved a respite of the sentence for a time; at the same time promising, that if such respite were granted, he would undertake to satisfy the king's demand. He would show him both the dream and the interpretation. And from what follows, we find that in his petition he was successful. Whether the king had calmly bethought himself and seen the iniquity of his rash sentence, or whether, upon seeing Daniel, he had now become sensible of his error in not sending for him sooner, we are not particularly informed; but we find that in consequence of this interview, the king's wrath was pacified, and Daniel's petition granted.

Daniel having obtained his request from the king, did not go to consult with the rest of the wise men of Babylon, but retired to his own house to consult with God, to whom he betakes himself for instruction and assistance. There, it would appear, he met with his three companions—Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah—whom he requested to unite with him in fervent supplication for direction and deliverance. He asks them to join with him in "desiring mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret." They were to plead no merit at God's throne, but cast themselves upon his mercy. Their supplication was to be pointed and particular "concerning this secret." The Chaldeans referred the king to "the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh," as the only source whence he could obtain relief; but Daniel and his fellows applied to the God of heaven. The gods of the nations are deaf and dumb

lying vanities; but our God, who is also Daniel's God, is in the heavens, he hath done whatsoever hath pleased him; they were to plead especially, that God would interpose for the preservation and deliverance of his own servants—"that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."

VERSE 19.—"Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven."

We are here informed how God answered the prayer of his servants. He revealed the whole matter to Daniel in a night vision. Some think that this revelation was made to him in a dream, and that he saw in his sleep the same dream which the king had. Others are of opinion, that while Daniel was watching and praying during the night, an angel was sent to him from heaven, with an account of the dream, and its interpretation. Be this as it may, we are certain that the disclosure of the matter was made in such a way as to convince Daniel of its reality, and assure him of the truth and genuineness of the revelation, and that it came from the God of heaven. For this great mercy, Daniel expresses his warmest gratitude—"Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven." And it would appear that his gratitude was expressed, as the gratitude of every saint ought to be, immediately upon the reception of the mercy, and the answer to his prayer. He did not wait until he had told the dream and its interpretation to the king, and saw what effect it produced, but he immediately gave glory to God and showed forth his praise.

VERSES 20–23.—"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter."

In these verses, we have the expression of praise and honour which Daniel gave to God for his merciful interposition. Here he celebrates him as a God of infinite perfections, and rich in mercy and compassion: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever." He is eternal and unchangeable, and deserves eternal praise. He is a God who alone possesses infinite wisdom and omnipotent power: "Wisdom and might are his."

He praises God as the God of providence, and there can be no doubt but he has a reference to these striking dispensations of his providence that were to appear in the fulfilment of the interpretation of the dream. Whatever changes take place in the times and seasons, they are effected by God. The changes in the aspect of the affairs of the world, which the demolition of the image was to produce, in all the succeeding ages of time, were, and are all under the control of the God of infinite power and wisdom. The setting up and the removal of kings, prefigured by the image of the vision, is all the work of his omnipotent arm. Is any man possessed of superior wisdom and discernment? he has it from the God of wisdom, and he is never so

far advanced in wisdom as to be beyond God's teaching; for "he giveth wisdom to the wise," and they who have understanding and discernment are best fitted and most likely to receive his instruction—"He giveth knowledge to them that know understanding."

He acknowledges that God alone could reveal "deep and secret things." He has revealed that secret which lay deep in his counsels, but which is now made known to Daniel, when no other could have done so. He can look into the darkest recess, and the most hidden secrets concealed. These are before his omniscient eye as visible as in the brightest sunbeam. To the eye and to the discernment of man, the dream of the king, as well as its future signification, was shrouded in impenetrable darkness; but it was clear before the knowledge of the Most High—"The light dwelleth with him." It is his robe with which he covers himself. He dwells in it, and it is from him that all the beams of light, and knowledge, and discovery emanate.

Having celebrated God's glorious attributes, Daniel also gives thanks to him for the special favour which was the subject of their petitions,—the discovery which God had made to him of the king's matter. He recognises him as the God of their fathers, in opposition to the gods of the Chaldeans, and in the faith that he was still mindful of them, although at present carried captive by the enemy, and residing in a land of abominable idols; and he acknowledges that all that wisdom and might which he possessed, were the gifts of the God of heaven; and he praises God for revealing to him the king's matter, while he had hid it from the wise men of Baby-

lon. Thus God puts honour upon the spirit of prophecy, while he pours contempt upon the spirit of divination; and he honours his own prophets, above all the multitude of the heathen sages, with the proud monarch of Babylon at their head. For although the dream was given to Babylon's monarch, the recalling of it and its interpretation, or the prediction involved in it, was given to Daniel, God's own prophet; and along with him his three companions, who joined him in supplication at God's throne.

VERSE 24.—"Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him, Destroy not the wise men of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation."

Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, had received orders from the king to slay all the wise men of Babylon. This sentence seems to have been suspended for a short time, at the request of Daniel, and having received his answer from the God of heaven, he now went to the king's captain and chief executioner and requested him to suspend the sentence further until he should bring Daniel in before the king. And he promises to show the king the interpretation of his dream. This request was made by Daniel, not only in behalf of himself and his three companions, but also in behalf of all the wise men of Babylon; which kindness was ill-requited by the Chaldeans, when, a short time after, they accused Daniel's companions before the king, and had them cast into a burning fiery furnace.

VERSES 25–28.—"Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation. The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king; but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these."

Arioch in haste complies with Daniel's request, and introduces him to the king as if he himself had the merit of finding such a man. As if he had been busying himself and at great pains, seeking a man throughout the kings dominions that could tell him his dream, whereas he was only seeking Daniel and his companions to be slain; and now, in order to ingratiate himself with his sovereign, he tells him that he has found one among the captives of Judah. The king, very likely, addressing Daniel by the Babylonish name that had been given him, asked him if he was able and ready to make known to him the dream that he had seen and its interpretation.

In reply to his question, Daniel informed the king, that this was a secret which lay beyond the reach of all the wisdom and learning of all the wise men of Babylon; and this statement he made, no doubt, as an apology for the wise men's refusal to tell the dream, and especially to show the king the fallacy of trusting to the divinations of these magical soothsayers, and to

teach him to look beyond these pretenders, to that wisdom which comes from the God of heaven. "There is a God in heaven," says he, "that revealeth secrets." And he instructs the monarch, that the God who is infinite in wisdom and knowledge had given him a dream which was of vast importance, inasmuch as it made known to the king the dispensations of God toward his Church and toward the world in the latter days—that is, to the end of time; for it is evident, from the interpretation of the dream, these "latter days" include the period of the gospel dispensation, to its latest existence in our world.

Daniel then proceeds to tell the king this remarkable dream which he had forgotten, but he first refers to the occasion of it, and in bringing this to the recollection of the king, he would be the more readily convinced of the truth of the narrative.

VERSES 29, 30.—"(As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed what should come to pass hereafter; and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass: but as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart)."

Some think that the thoughts of the king to which Daniel refers, were the different parts of the dream which related to things hereafter; but we rather think that the statement means, that the king, upon his bed, had been thinking and meditating about what was likely to happen in future ages,—whether all the

present pomp and splendour of Babylon's monarchy would be continued, or what kind of government and kings were to succeed him; and that the dream was sent him by God who reveals secrets, in answer to his strong desire to look into futurity, in order to show him what should be hereafter. Thus the God of heaven in great condescension was pleased to reveal to this heathen monarch what was to happen in after ages, in answer to his anxious thoughts.

But this revelation of God's future dispensations toward his Church and toward the world, although given in a dream to the king of Babylon, would have for ever remained secret, having been obliterated from his mind, had not God graciously renewed the revelation to Daniel his servant. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." And Daniel tells the king that even this revelation of God's will to him was a dispensation of grace and mercy. It was not revealed to him for any superior wisdom that he possessed; "but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king," and for the sake of the king himself, who was so perplexed about the matter, that he might know the thoughts of his heart.

VERSES 31–35.—"Thou, O king, sawest, and. behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof *was* terrible. This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass,

the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer thrashing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

Daniel now tells the king his dream and its interpretation, and there can be little doubt that the king recognised it as the identical dream which had troubled him, but which had slipped from his memory. Daniel, first gives the dream itself from verse 31 to 35. Regarding this dream the following things are noticeable: —1. The prediction involved in the dream was presented to the king in the form of an image. The same monarchies of which this image was the symbol, were presented to Daniel in vision (chap. vii.) in the form of four beasts,—which accorded with his ideas of these tyrannical powers; but to the king of Babylon they were presented in the form of a splendid image of a man, in accordance with his ideas, who was an admirer of the pomp and splendour of earthly kingdoms. Babylon was the land of idols, of which Nebuchadnezzar was a worshipper; but in this vision God showed him that not only the most splendid image was subject to destruction, but that these earthly powers which it symbolized were destined to perish. 2. It was both excellent and terrible in its appearance. It had all the beautiful symmetry of the human form, and all the brightness of the metals of which it was composed, and yet it was terrible in its aspect. It symbolized the beauty and splendour of earthly kingdoms, with the terrible scowl of despotism and oppression. The language may have a reference also to its gigantic

stature and size, which in the eye of the king might have a very formidable and alarming aspect. 3. It was composed of various metals. Its head was of gold, that metal which has always been esteemed the most precious; its breast and arms were of silver, that metal next in value, but inferior to gold; its belly and thighs of brass, inferior to silver; and its legs of iron; and its feet part of iron and part of clay. Such was the bright and terrible image presented to the king of Babylon in his dream, and now described to him by God's own prophet; but there was also exhibited to this monarch the fate of this extraordinary figure.

The king having observed the form and features and composition of the image, saw a stone cut out without hands moving from its bed in the quarry, without the intervention of human power, but by a hand unseen, and coming down upon the feet of the image and breaking it in pieces; and this stroke seems to have been most powerful and effective, for although it fell chiefly upon the legs and feet of the image, it took effect upon the whole image, which tumbled into a ruinous mass. The iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold were broken in pieces together. And not only were they broken by the stroke of this stone, but their very pith and substance passed away; they became light as chaff in its lightest form—"as the chaff in the summer threshing-floors." But even there they were not allowed to rest, for the "wind carried them away," and that so effectually, that "no place was found for them." But this stone, which produced such disastrous effects upon the image, "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

VERSES 36–38.—"This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold."

Daniel having told the king his dream, which, being thus brought to his recollection, the king, doubtless, would recognise, he tells him that he and his fellows, who were likely at this moment along with him, would give the interpretation of it. And we might here remark in general, that in this interpretation, we find that this image represented worldly kingdoms; but they were the worldly kingdoms more immediately connected with the history of the Church. The kingdoms of this world are seldom made the subject of prophecy in God's Word, unless in so far as they in some way or other affect the interests of the Church, or are connected with her history. It is also worthy of notice, that these four monarchies are not symbolized by four distinct statues, but by one image, doubtless intimating that, although distinct in their order and existence, they are all imbued with one spirit, and are all less or more opposed to the Church of Christ. The same power actuates the whole, only with different modifications, and the variety that is seen in this image intimates that that system, symbolized by the image, which has uniformly opposed the Church of Christ in this world, appears in different forms and in different aspects, according to the different ages of the world, and the different circumstances of the Church. Here it is represented under four great

powers or monarchies, some of which are subdivide into a variety of forms—legs, feet, and toes, partly iron and partly clay.

Daniel begins his interpretation with the head of the image, which appeared to be pure gold; and the interpretation given of this part of the image serves as a key to the right understanding of the whole. He tells Nebuchadnezzar that he, as the king of Babylon, and the representative of the Chaldean monarchy, was this head of gold: in other words, that the head of gold was the symbol of the Babylonish monarchy; and, consequently, the other portions of the image symbolized the monarchies that succeeded the Chaldean. Daniel takes occasion to illustrate the fitness of the figure, from the wealth, and power, and glory of the Babylonish kingdom, which appears to have reached its height under the reign of this proud monarch. "Thou, O king, art king of kings;" meaning that this was a title assumed by him, from the circumstance of his being the greatest monarch on the earth at that time, and that many kings and kingdoms were his tributaries. Babylon seems to have been a very ancient monarchy. We have an account of it being founded at a very early period of the world's history, by that mighty hunter, Nimrod (Gen. x. 10), whose spirit seems to have descended through the succeeding race of its monarchs, until it appeared in all its despotism and tyranny in this proud king before whom Daniel and his fellows stood; some maintain that it had 50 monarchs, and lasted 1600 years. While Daniel takes notice of his greatness and power, he reminds him that he held all his glory, and power, and dominion from the God of heaven: "For the

God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory." Nebuchadnezzar was indeed king of kings, in so far as he reigned over a few neighbouring potentates; but he was the subject of Him who claims this title in its highest sense, and to whom he was indebted for his kingdom.

Daniel speaks of his kingdom as very extensive,—wherever the children of men dwelt, the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven, were given into his hand; intimating the multitude, the variety, and the submission of his subjects. He speaks also of his government as very despotic: "He hath made thee ruler over them all: thou art this head of gold." The symbol of his great and absolute power, and of the wealth and glory of his kingdom.

VERSE 39.—"And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth."

The second monarchy, which was to succeed the Chaldean, was to be inferior. It was symbolized by the breast and arms of silver; this was the monarchy of the Medes and Persians, founded by Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede, his uncle. By them Babylon was taken and its monarchy overthrown in the days of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, in consequence of which the Medo-Persian monarchy was founded. These two allied monarchs are fitly represented by the two arms of silver.

The third monarchy, represented by the belly and thighs, or sides of brass, was the Grecian, founded by

Alexander the Great, who subdued Darius, the last of the Persian Emperors. This monarchy was inferior to the Persian, both in wealth and extent of dominion, but it is here said to "bear rule over all the earth," no doubt referring to the extent of Alexander's conquests, as well as to his boast that he had conquered the whole world, and wept because there was not another to conquer.

VERSE 40.—"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."

This fourth and last monarchy is the Roman. This is evident from the circumstances, that it is the only great power that succeeded the Grecian, and that it was in the days of this monarchy that Christ set up his gospel kingdom in the world, according to the prediction in verse 44. The description given here exactly agrees with the characteristics of the Roman monarchy —"The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron." Its characteristic was strength and power, and the application of that power, in breaking in pieces and bruising all who opposed it for many ages. It brake in pieces the Grecian monarchy and also the Jewish nation. It trampled under its feet of iron every nation that fell under its power; and the tread of its iron feet and toes, even although mixed with miry clay, is still felt by the nations over whom, even in its broken state, it still sways its sceptre,*—"As iron dreaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise."

* Some of its footprints are yet visible in some parts of Britain.

VERSES 41-43.—"And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay; *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they thall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

In these verses we have a more particular description of the fourth kingdom—the Roman monarchy. The two legs of the image symbolized the two great divisions into which that empire was separated, generally called the Eastern and Western. It was afterward divided into ten kingdoms, prefigured by the ten toes. These formed the ten kingdoms of Europe over which the Roman Empire once swayed its sceptre. In the book of Revelation they are represented by the ten horns of the beast. But they are here particularly described "as being formed partly of iron and partly of potter's clay," which, we are told by Daniel, points out three important facts,—1. That the kingdom, although divided—divided into two, and afterwards into ten—shall have in it the strength of the iron: it shall still contain in it, even in the form of ten kingdoms, part of the iron despotic power of the ancient empire. 2. That as this iron was mixed with clay, it shall be partly broken or brittle; that is, the ancient iron or despotic power shall, to some extent, give way and be weakened. And, 3. That though the iron was mixed with clay, they shall not cleave together or be amalgamated. "They shall mingle themselves with the

seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." This language appears evidently to refer to the attempt made by some of these kingdoms, or even by all of them, to consolidate their power, and support the despotic and tyrannical form of government, by mixing it with the power of the people over whom they ruled. But we are informed here, and facts agree with it, that, instead of strengthening such despotism, it weakens it, and renders it more liable to be broken. The despotic and popular element of governments may exist together, may act together, and may, to some extent, neutralize each other's operations, but they can never amalgamate. Hence, in the best ordered government formed of such materials, there are always to be seen the distinct operations of both, in the one attempting to counteract and counterbalance the other. They cannot cleave together, even as iron cannot mix with clay. How clearly has this been verified in many of the kingdoms of the Roman Empire!

VERSES 44, 45.—"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known unto the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

The prophet in these verses gives the interpretation

of the stone which the king of Babylon saw cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote and broke in pieces the image, and which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This stone, we are told, was the symbol of a kingdom, distinct from all these kingdoms prefigured by the image—a kingdom which is destined to consume all the despotism, and tyranny, and oppression of earthly kingdoms. This kingdom prefigured by the stone, we understand to be the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he has set up in the world—that is, his Church, containing all the principles of civil and religious liberty, opposed to the despotism and tyranny of earthly powers.

The prophet gives a very interesting and graphic description of this kingdom, the particulars of which demand our attention.

1. It was set up in the days of these kings—that is, in the days of the kingdoms of the Roman Empire. Its setting up refers to its introduction into the world by Jesus Christ in the form of the gospel dispensation; for although this kingdom existed in the world ever since the first announcement of the scheme of salvation, yet the introduction of the gospel is often called the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Hence Christ commissions his disciples to proclaim that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand." Now this kingdom was set up by Christ in the days of the Roman Empire, when the dominion of that empire was extended even over the land of Judah. It was set up in defiance of all the power and opposition of the Roman Empire. At the very time when this empire was plucking the sceptre

from the hand of Judah, Shiloh was approaching. At the very time when this empire was stretching its sceptre over Palestine did Christ the King of Zion make his appearance and set up his kingdom, and the proud decree of Rome, "that all the world should be taxed," was overruled by God, as the means of ushering this mighty monarch with his kingdom into the world according to the Scriptures.

2. It was set up, not by any human power or policy, but by the God of heaven; the figure was a stone cut out *without hands*. The kingdoms of this world are represented by an image which is formed by human skill—gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, formed into a human figure—the work of the hands of the craftsman, but this kingdom is the doing of the Lord, and therefore marvellous in our eyes.

3. It is distinct from all earthly kingdoms. They appear embodied in the image; but this kingdom is the stone from the mountain quarry. It comes from a different quarter, and is composed of different materials. It is possessed of higher authority, and wields a greater power. It is endowed with richer privileges, and is governed by different laws. Its monarch is a different king, and it has a higher destination. Hence Christ says of it, "My kingdom is not of this world."

4. It is a kingdom that shall prosper and be victorious. Long has it been trampled upon by the despotism and tyranny of earthly powers; but we are here informed that "it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms," just as the stone "brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold." Not that the Church or kingdom of Christ shall de-

stroy all civil government, but by its spirit and influence it shall consume every thing in these kingdoms that is opposed to it, and change them into the very spirit and aspect of the kingdom of Christ; and then shall be fulfilled that glorious prediction (Rev. xi. 15): "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

5. It is a kingdom that shall continue for ever: "It shall never be destroyed," "and it shall stand for ever," says the prophet. Its king shall have no successor, for we are here told, "it shall not be left to other people;" it has been preserved in existence in spite of all the opposition and hostility of earthly kingdoms, and it shall continue on the earth while this world lasts, and after that it shall stand for ever in heaven.

6. The increase and extension of this kingdom are also predicted here. It begins like a stone cut out of the mountain, it rolls down the mountain side, accelerating in its progress until it come with such increasing force against the image, as to break it in pieces and consume it. And when that is effected, its increase of motion is turned into increase of size, and it becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth;—a most graphic description of the increase, the extension, and glory of the Church of Christ in the world, when the kingdoms of the world become his.

Are not the signs of our own times awfully significant of the near approach of these striking and important events which are here predicted? We live in the days, and in the *advanced* days, of the reign of the toes

of the image—the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire; and in our day, is not the stone, with all its sparkling rays of light and liberty, seen descending upon them with great force? Is not its motion accelerating as it approaches the bottom of the mountain? A sure token that the final crash is at no great distance, when the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold shall tumble into one mass of ruins.

Daniel assures the king of the certainty of the dream and of the fulfilment of its prediction, and also of the correctness of its interpretation: "The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation sure." In opposition to all the heathen gods, in whom the king of Babylon trusted, and whom he worshipped, Daniel is careful to tell him that it was the great God of heaven and earth that had made this revelation to him, and therefore what he had declared would certainly come to pass. None of the heathen gods could declare what should come to pass hereafter. This was the prerogative of the great God of heaven and earth; and in showing these things to the king, God had highly favoured him. The king therefore could be in no hesitation regarding the certainty of the dream, or the accuracy of the interpretation. There was no deception here, for it was the declaration of the God of faithfulness; and terrible as its aspect might be to the powers of the world, it was sure to come to pass. Two things are here referred to as undoubted evidence of its truth and certainty.

1. He saw the stone cut out of the mountain without hands: "Forasmuch as thou sawest the stone," &c.

In this figure the symbol of a kingdom is seen arising without the aid of any human power or human skill. The whole of this striking operation by an unseen hand, in bringing the stone out of the mountain, and causing it to roll in the direction of the image, showed that it was the work of the great God, and not of man. And in seeing this, the king had the most undoubted evidence that it was the great God who was revealing future events unto him.

2. That stone brake in pieces the whole materials of which this gigantic image was composed. This was an operation which not only showed the hand of God in it, but also that there was no human power that could stand before him. The king saw an image of strong and durable materials broken in pieces, and ground to powder by a stone cut out of a mountain—the most powerful earthly kingdoms broken in pieces by a kingdom whose external appearance, in the eyes of the world, was but mean and contemptible. This was a sure evidence that it was the work of God, and that he alone could reveal this; that "the dream was certain, and the interpretation sure."

VERSE 46.—"Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him."

We have here an account of the manner in which Nebuchadnezzar received this intelligence. Instead of being enraged, as might have been expected, at the unwelcome news of the approaching dissolution of his empire, and of the overthrow of all despotism and tyranny, we find him receiving it with the most pro-

found awe and reverence, as a supernatural oracle. He looked upon Daniel as a god, and fell down on his face before him to do him homage. This was the custom in Eastern nations of doing homage to kings; but it would seem that this heathen monarch, as yet ignorant of the true God, and of the nature of his worship, intended to give this homage to Daniel as one whom he supposed possessed divine knowledge, and was to be ranked among the gods: for we are told that "he commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him." We need scarcely wonder at a heathen idolater falling into this gross mistake, when a similar error was committed by Cornelius falling down to worship Peter, and by John in the Isle of Patmos offering homage to the angel, and were only prevented by the reproof of those whom they intended to worship. This oblation and sweet odours which the king commanded to be offered to Daniel, was no doubt a sacrifice which they were accustomed to offer to some of their idols; but doubtless Daniel refused this homage, and prevented the offering being made. We have no account of its being actually offered, nor have we any record of what Daniel said in order to prevent it: but in the following verse we have the king's reply to him.

VERSES 47–49.—"The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is*, that your God *is* a God of gods, and Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the gover-

nors over all the wise *men* of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king."

He acknowledged the God of Daniel to be the true God—that he is the God of gods, above all the gods of the heathen, and all powers whatever. That he is the Lord of kings, the ruler and governor of all earthly monarchs, and that he alone was the revealer of secrets, and that all this was forced upon his conviction from the fact that he had revealed this secret to Daniel.

The king then advanced Daniel, and the greatness which he conferred upon him refers to the power, and honour, and riches of the kingdom of Babylon. In character and in communion with God, he possessed a greatness which no earthly monarch could bestow. Nebuchadnezzar bestowed upon him many great gifts, enriched him with worldly treasure: he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon—like Joseph in the Court of Pharaoh, only in the throne was he greater than Daniel—and "he made him chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon," both to instruct them and to rule over them.

Daniel being thus exalted to the highest place in the State next to the throne, employed his influence with the king in behalf of his three companions, who had assisted him with their prayers. Nebuchadnezzar listened to his request; and while Daniel was appointed chief judge, to sit in the king's gate, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were set over the affairs of the province of Babylon. In this dignified and honourable position these men were, no doubt, in the provi-

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dence of God, a great blessing to their brethren in their captivity, and a powerful support and assistance to Daniel in the government of the kingdom.

The following practical truths are plainly taught us in this chapter:—1. God can easily disturb the mind of the most powerful and the most securely guarded monarch in this world. 2. Arbitrary or despotic power is often very unreasonable. 3. God often overrules the most unreasonable actions of men for his own glory. 4. The wrath of man is most effectually appeased by a soft and wise answer. 5. In times of trial and of danger, it is of vast importance to have the prayers of our pious friends. 6. God's mercies, in whatever shape they come, deserve our warmest gratitude. 7. All the power and glory of earthly kingdoms is just according to God's permission. 8. God can set up his own kingdom and preserve it in the midst of the most powerful opposing systems. 9. God shall one day consume all powers and systems that have opposed his kingdom in this world. 10. The kingdom of Christ, though little at first, shall one day be very extensive, powerful, and glorious. 11. It is possible for those who have no love to God, and little knowledge of him, to express their reverence for, and approbation of his servants. 12. To give that homage to creatures which is due to God is idolatry. 13. The God of heaven is above all created powers, and has them all under his control. 14. When good men are, in the providence of God, raised to high places in power and authority, it is of great advantage to the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER III.

VERSES 1–3.—"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* three-score cubits, *and* the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up."

IN the preceding chapter we find the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, exalted to great power and honour in the province of Babylon; but here we find them under the displeasure of the monarch who had exalted them. And this for no other reason than maintaining their integrity in the worship of the God of heaven, whom the king of Babylon, on the occasion of their advancement, had acknowledged to be "a God of gods, and a Lord of kings." So uncertain and

fleeting is the favour of man, and so unreasonable and frantic does civil power become when it interferes with the conscience.

The date of this story is not given by Daniel, but it is generally supposed that it was not long after the event recorded in the preceding chapter. And if so, we are almost led to the conclusion that Nebuchadnezzar erected this idol of heathen worship after the model of the image that appeared to him in his dream. How perverted and debased does the human mind become by idolatry! He saw that image, excellent and terrible as was its glory and form, demolished by a stone rolling down the mountain-side, and yet he must have an image for his god. He saw the judgment of the God of gods executed upon it, and yet, in defiance of that God of judgment, he would set up an image to be worshipped in the place of God. He saw an image, although composed of metals the most durable, which could not save itself, and yet he would fall down before an image of this fashion and mould, and cry to it to save him. Babylon was the country of idols, and this idolatrous monarch, who seemed to reckon the making of idols his prerogative, by this image, added another to the number. But while he boasted in the prerogative of his crown, he discovered the degradation of his own mind, and the absurdity of his conduct. He "debased himself even to hell," by worshipping the work of his own hands; and acted a part the most inconsistent, in honouring the God of heaven as God of gods, and yet giving homage to an idol. This image was erected by Nebuchadnezzar at great expense. It was gigantic in its dimensions—three-score cubits in height, and six in

breadth, which, according to the ordinary cubit, would be ninety feet in height and nine feet in breadth—and it was made of gold, which is generally supposed to refer only to the covering or overlaying of the image with that precious metal, as it is scarcely to be supposed that, rich as he was, this monarch could have afforded to construct an image of such dimensions of solid gold. Even in the overlaying of such an image with gold, there must have been great expense. With all its monstrous height, and with all its cost, however, it was lifeless—a dead and dumb idol. And as a god, or an object of worship, it was as worthless as the mire of the street.

The prophet assigns no reason why the king at this time erected this image. Some conjecture that it was with the design of clearing himself from the imputation of having become a Jew; he having lately spoken so honourably of the God of Israel, and having exalted some of the servants of that God to high places in his kingdom. Others think, that having been told by Daniel that the head of gold upon the image in his dream prefigured himself as the head of the Babylonish monarchy, he, in the pride of his heart, must have an image erected wholly of that metal, as an object of worship. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that the whole scheme was a proud display of his greatness and of his authority. This image was set up in the plain of Dura—a place chosen, very likely, where it could be seen to great advantage by the vast multitudes that were to assemble at its dedication.

This image having been erected, a summons is issued by Nebuchadnezzar to all the great men and

rulers in his kingdom to attend at its dedication. Messengers are dispatched to all parts of his dominions to gather together the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, sheriffs and rulers, for this purpose; and if these are gathered together, there was little doubt of the lower classes of the people attending. These princes and great men being summoned, immediately assembled and stood before the image, and with them a vast multitude of people. This king was not only a worshipper of idols, but he involved all his subjects in idolatry.

VERSES 4–6.—"Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

In these verses, we have the proclamation made by the king to this assembled multitude. There appears here to have been a numerous crowd from all the different quarters of his realms, for he addresses them as a people of different nations and languages. A herald is employed to make the announcement, that every one of that vast assembly should fall down and worship this golden image which the king had set up. That they should do this simultaneously. That notice was to be given of the time when this was to be done, by a concert of instrumental music—"the cornet, flute,

harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all other kinds of music"—a concert intended, not only to give the signal for worship, but to grace the solemnity, and to excite the devotion of the worshippers. And that whosoever did not obey this proclamation, and fall down and worship the image, should without an hour's respite be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And in order to enforce his command, and to show that the penalty threatened was no bugbear, he seems to have had the furnace ready prepared.

VERSE 7.—"Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

Here we have an account of the people's ready compliance with the king's injunction. The music sounded, and the people instantly fell down and worshipped the image which the king had set up. The worship of idols was the common practice of these people; but at this time, it was in obedience to the king's commandment, and under the fear of the penalty.

Now it may be of importance to consider the principle involved in this—viz., compulsion in matters of religion, or the attempt of civil power to compel the conscience in acts of worship. This, although one of the most striking specimens of the development of this principle, was not peculiar to Nebuchadnezzar or to his government. It is not even peculiar to the maintenance of heathen idolatry, nor to the worship of God in any particular form. But it is a principle inhe-

rent in every kind of worship, and every kind of religion, true or false, that is established and maintained by civil power. It matters little whether that religion bear the name of Paganism or of Christianity, of Popery or of Protestantism; if it is established by civil power, and upheld by civil pains and penalties, it has the same principle involved in it that is displayed by the proclamation of Nebuchadnezzar on the plain of Dura. A very slight attention to the few following features in the character of this worship, commanded by the king of Babylon, will suffice to convince us of the truth of these statements. 1. It was worship set up and enforced by civil power. It was to be performed at the command of the monarch of Babylon. The same is true regarding every form of worship established by civil governments. They have the sanction of civil authority. 2. The time and manner of this worship was commanded by the king of Babylon—so is it with every establishment of religion. Days are commanded to be observed, and the form of worship receives the sanction of earthly governments. 3. It was attended with great outward pomp and splendour, which is generally a characteristic of all forms of worship, established by civil law, and thus they are surrounded with every enticement to the external senses. 4. It was enforced by civil pains and penalties. If not performed as commanded, the person declining was to be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Is not this the case with every religion established by civil authority? These pains and penalties may assume various forms, according to circumstances, but they are all based on the same principle. They are sometimes

enforced in the shape of civil disabilities, denuding men of their civil rights and privileges; sometimes in the form of fines and confiscation of property, and sometimes in imprisonment and death. This requires no illustration to those who have given the slightest attention to their history. The illustration of this is written over the face of Europe for hundreds of years past, in letters of blood. Some indeed may be disposed to call the truth of this in question, and to remind us that in some countries where such systems exist, *toleration* is granted to men to worship as they choose. We are far from denying this fact, or undervaluing the boon as a blessing in the overruling providence of Heaven; but there is scarcely anything that so clearly indicates the spirit of persecution as *toleration*. He who claims the power to tolerate his fellow man in the exercise of his religion, tells him at the same time, and in the same breath, that he has the power to withhold that toleration, and to prevent him worshipping as he chooses. Toleration, although in the overruling providence of God it may be a blessing to the worshipper, is an insult offered to the conscience, or it is offering to a man that to which he has as good a right as he who offers it, and is never granted but where it is wrested from the persecuting power, by the progress of civil and religious liberty. It is matter of joy to the Church of Christ and to the world, that every antitype of this golden image and its worship, is in our day breaking down and becoming more and more powerless.

VERSES 8–12.—"Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake, and said

to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. There are certain Jews, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

In these verses we have an accusation brought against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, for disregarding the king's commandment. We have no account of Daniel being present in this large assembly that were summoned together by the king's commandment, nor is any reason assigned for his absence. Doubtless some part of his business required his presence in another part of the kingdom. But it appears that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were present. They had obeyed the summons of the king so far as it referred to the gathering together of the assembly; but they had come, not to worship his image, but to bear testimony against such heaven-daring iniquity, and they appear to have been the only dissenters found in this vast assemblage. For this there was an accusation laid against them before the king by certain Chaldeans; in all probability some of the very men whose lives had been saved by means of the prayers of Daniel and these three men. So ungrateful are superstitious and wicked men! And perhaps their accusation was the effect of envy—expecting to be advanced to their places in power and authority in the kingdom, if they could

but obtain their removal or their destruction. They addressed the king with the usual salutation, and apparently with great respect, pretending to honour him, while they were preparing such measures as would bring disgrace upon his reign, and expose him to the just indignation of Heaven. These men remind him of the decree that he had just issued regarding the worship of this image, and of the penalty with which it was to be enforced. And they speak of it as if it had been a most righteous and reasonable statute. And they inform him that there are certain Jews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who had disregarded his edict, and rebelled against his authority. They had declined to fall down with the rest of the multitude, and to worship the golden image. How maliciously do these Chaldeans strive to aggravate the offence of these three men, and to incense the king against them!* They remind him that they are Jews, his captives and slaves, whom every respectable Babylonian must despise; that they had been highly honoured by him in being advanced to high places of power in his kingdom; and that, notwithstanding all this, they had rebelled against him, from pure disrespect, or wanton malignity. "These men," say they, "have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Thus they were represented as mean and base in their character, ungrateful and immoral in their conduct, and disloyal and rebellious against the authority of their sovereign, while they were in reality the excellent of the earth, the true fearers of God, and the most loyal subjects of the king.

VERSES 13–15.—"Then Nebuchadnezzar, in *his* rage and fury, commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said unto them, *Is it* true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now, if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, *well:* but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Having received this information, the king lost all command of his temper, and gave way to the most ungovernable rage and fury, which evidently showed his unfitness to rule over a kingdom, inasmuch as he could not govern his own spirit. In this ebullition of his wrath, he displayed his unreasonable pride and superstition, and showed that, as a judge in this matter, it was most unlikely he would act with any degree of justice or equity. In this unhallowed passion, he commands to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego into his presence, and they are instantly seized and brought before him.

These men having been brought into his presence, he conducts the trial himself, if trial it might be called, in which is exhibited, perhaps, one of the most striking scenes recorded in the annals of persecution. Here we see the princes of the Court of Heaven, the excellent of the earth, arraigned before the slave of the most debasing human passions. On the one side we see the most debased perversion of reason and justice; while on the

other we see the noblest stand made for the cause of God and the purity of his worship. On the one hand, we see the seat of judgment occupied by undiluted despotism, cruel tyranny, and blinded superstition, kindled into wild and devouring rage and fury; while on the other we see the noble, and dignified, and independent spirit of pure and undefiled religion elevated above all the pomp and splendour of earthly thrones, pouring contempt on the pride of the oppressor, and setting at defiance the wrath of man. This enraged monarch prefers the charge against them, and he does so by asking them, if it was true, as reported, that they had refused to serve his gods, and to worship his golden image? He speaks as if he felt surprise at their conduct, as if he thought that, of all others, they would be expected to obey his commands. Men who occupied a high place in the government of the country, and whose example would have great influence, was it possible that they should take the lead in disobedience to the king? Is it possible that you have entered into a treasonable plot against your sovereign? And do ye refuse to worship the gods that I, your sovereign and benefactor, have made? But lest there might be any mistake in the information given him, or any misunderstanding on their part, he offers to give them yet another opportunity of yielding obedience to his decree: "Now, if ye be ready, that at what time ye hear the sound" of all the musical instruments, "ye fall down and worship the image that I have made, well;" your former offence shall be overlooked, and what is past shall be forgotten; "but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery

furnace." The dreadful alternative was presented to them, either to worship the idol, or to be cast alive into a furnace of fire; and he concludes his threat with that impiously daring boast, by which he insultingly sets the God of heaven at defiance—"Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Never did human boasting appear more daringly wicked, and never was the boast of a poor proud sinner turned into greater foolishness. Proud, vain sinner! He not only attempts to invade the citadel of conscience, but proposes to measure arms with the Omnipotent. In a very little he found that God could not only deliver his servants out of *his* hand, but, by a single word, drive him from his kingdom, and bind him up to the oxen's crib for seven years.

VERSES 16–18.—"Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter, If it be *so*, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

These men answered this proud monarch, and their answer is perhaps one of the finest specimens of dauntless courage and noble independence. In the calm fortitude of true and magnanimous heroism, they tell the enraged monarch that their resolution is taken, not to comply with his injunction. "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this

matter," which means, not that they were indifferent to the matter, but either that there was no necessity for an answer, for if he was determined that they should die for disobeying his command, they were determined to submit to it—if his decree was stern and unchangeable, so was their resolution—or, that they had not an answer to seek or to prepare for him, they required no time to deliberate on this point, or to contrive an answer for him, for without the slightest hesitation they were resolved not to yield to his command. And they tell him that if he was resolved to put his threat into execution, they had put their trust in the living God, whom they served. They were assured that he was able to deliver them, and that the king's boast that no God could do so was vain. They were even actuated by the hope that their God would deliver them; whether from the burning fiery furnace or not, they were sure that he would deliver them out of the king's hand, so as to save them from any real damage from his wrath. He might consume their bodies to ashes in his furnace, but he could not touch the immortal soul. And even although there was no deliverance to be wrought in saving them from the burning fire, they tell the king that they are fully resolved not to worship his image. That command of heaven's Sovereign, "Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them" (graven images), weighed ten thousand times more with them than all the authority of the Chaldean despot; and that rich promise of God, "They that honour me I will honour," was to these three champions in God's kingdom, more attractive and alluring than all the temptations to yield which their

circumstances presented. Temptations under which thousands have fallen, these noble characters resisted, and that stern mandate, which brought the pride and splendour of Babylon to its knees before an abominable idol, they sternly refused to obey; and by the grace of that God whom they served, they were preserved from idolatry, and also from the consuming flame of the fiery furnace.

VERSES 19–21.—"Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

This noble resolution of these three young men, instead of making the king bethink himself, filled him with rage and fury against them, and so violent was his wrath, that it changed his very countenance. While the calm security of conscious integrity sat upon the brow of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, the visage of the monarch was distorted with the violent fury of his unhallowed passion. And he commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more than it used to be for other criminals. This could scarcely be supposed to have added to their sufferings, hut it served as the index of the heat of that fury

which filled the mind of this despot, and it rendered their deliverance much more glorious and astonishing. He then commanded his sentence to be executed, and the strongest men in his army were selected as the executioners. These were ordered to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, just as they then stood, with all their clothing, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. This command was instantly obeyed. These subservient slaves obeyed the order of the tyrant to the very letter. They bound the three men in all their garments, and cast them into the midst of the fire! It is difficult to say which is the object of greatest wonder here, the cruelty of the tyrant or the firmness of the three men—the king casting three of his best and most loyal subjects into the heart of a burning fiery furnace, for obeying God rather than man, or these men submitting to be cast into the midst of devouring fire, rather than yield to the king's commandment. This was a scene which, doubtless, filled assembled Babylon, on the plain of Dura, with astonishment.

VERSES 22, 23.—"Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

The flame of that furnace must have been exceeding hot, when it was heated seven times more than its ordinary. The king's commandment was urgent, that

they should, without delay or hesitation, cast them into the furnace, and see that they make sure work; and these mighty men, anxious to show their loyalty, and their readiness to obey their sovereign, approaching the very mouth of the furnace, no sooner having cast the three men into it, were themselves slain with its flame. In this there is a striking display of the watchful and overruling providence of God. He makes that very fire, kindled by the persecutors of his servants, and into which they had cast them—the instrument of their own destruction. These servants of the most high God fell down bound into the midst of the furnace, while its burning flame consumed the men who, with unhallowed hands had cast them into it. God in awful judgment sending a few sparks from the furnace, or by a single breath of wind turning the flame in the direction of these men, and thus consuming them in a moment. In this awful and striking manner, the vengeance of Heaven overtook them for executing the unrighteous command of this cruel monarch, while the punishment of the king was reserved to a future occasion.

VERSES 24–27.—"Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach,

and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of the fire had passed on them."

We have here an account of the miraculous preservation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the midst of the fiery furnace: they fell down bound in it, but the fire seems to have consumed nothing but their bonds. The king, we are told, was astonied. Some think his astonishment was caused by the sudden and awful death of his mighty men, or that it was the effect of some supernatural impression upon his mind; but the true cause of it appears evidently to have been the miraculous appearance presented to his view in the midst of the furnace. The destruction of his mighty warriors by the devouring flame might cause him to inspect the furnace, or perhaps he looked toward it, in order to glut his cruel vengeance in seeing its victims consumed in the fire. But a spectacle is presented to him which filled him with astonishment, and he rises up in haste and flies to consult with his counsellors, who, it appears, had given their sanction to the murderous deed, and he puts the question to them, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" In answer to this appeal, they acknowledged that it was true. To this the king replied, that he saw four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire unhurt. Every circumstance was calculated to fill him with

astonishment, while it displayed the wonderful and miraculous interposition of almighty power. The king and his counsellors expected that the fire would have consumed the men they had cast into it, but it had only loosed their bonds. They appeared altogether unhurt, not even making any attempt to escape from such an apparently dangerous position, but walking about as in a garden of pleasure. On them the fire had no power. But there was one circumstance in the scene which heightened the king's astonishment, and was sufficient to account for all the rest. There was a fourth person in the furnace, of whom the king said "his form was like the Son of God." Some understand this person to have been an angel, sent down by God to deliver his servants. But others, with far more probability, understand him to be the uncreated angel of the covenant, the only begotten Son of God. This view appears the more tenable, being corroborated by the circumstance of Christ often appearing under the Old Testament economy, in human likeness, as in the case of Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, Manoah, &c. He was the great deliverer of his servants on this occasion, and literally fulfilled his promise, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." He is the God who could turn the counsels of the king of Babylon and his counsellors into foolishness, and in spite of their proud boasting, could deliver his servants out of their hands.

This heathen monarch could at this time have had no accurate knowledge of the Godhead, or of the only begotten Son of God as the Mediator, but the dignity, glory, and majesty of Christ were so visibly displayed,

that even this heathen was convinced of the superiority of his character to every thing that was earthly. He saw in him a form which, although in human likeness, ranked with divinity, and, impressed with the grandeur of his appearance, he declared that his "form was like the Son of God."

The king now appears to have been convinced that he had done wrong in casting these three men into the fiery furnace, and that their God was able to deliver them out of his hand. He is now convinced that they were miraculously preserved by him whose form was like the Son of God, and he calls upon them, in language tender and earnest, to come forth from the furnace. He addresses them as "servants of the most high God." He acknowledges that the Master whom they served, the monarch whose mandate they obeyed, was higher than the kings of the earth. And he entreats them to come forth publicly, in the presence of all his counsellors. And in compliance with his request, these three men step forth from the midst of the fire. We have no account of the manner in which the Son of God withdrew, but it would seem that after these three men came out of the furnace he was no more seen. He preserved them in the furnace, and conducted them safely beyond the reach of the fire, and then withdrew his visible manifestation.

This miracle was abundantly attested. These three men came forth unhurt, in the presence of all the nobility and gentry of the kingdom of Babylon. These princes and great men, and very likely the vast assembly that came to the dedication of the image, saw them come forth, and saw that the fire had taken no

effect either on their bodies, or on a single particle of their garments—not even a hair of their head was singed, nor so much as the smell of the fire had passed on them—on them the fire had no power. What contempt did God here cast upon the pride of Babylon and upon their idolatry! The fire was one of the gods which the Chaldeans worshipped, but God, in restraining the fire, showed them that he was the supreme ruler, and that not only their king, but their gods were in his hand, and that he could do with them as he pleased: He could say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther."

VERSES 28–30.—"*Then* Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon."

Nebuchadnezzar and his princes were convinced of the reality of this miracle, and astonished at the wonderful interposition of God in the deliverance of his servants. We have here an account of the effect produced by this upon the king himself. He praises the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, for this extraordinary deliverance. He is now made to acknow-

ledge that the God of Israel is far greater than the gods of Babylon, and that he is able and ready to protect and deliver those who trust in him. There was not a god in Babylon that could protect or deliver their votaries—his mighty men of war, even at the mouth of the furnace; but Israel's God could deliver his servants in the very midst of the furnace. Nebuchadnezzar is convinced that the fourth person in the furnace, whom he here calls an angel of God, but whose form, he said was like the Son of God, was the deliverer, and he records it as a striking instance of his goodness and mercy. And these three men against whom his hottest rage burned, whom he had denounced as rebels, and attempted to punish as such, now appear to rise in his estimation, and he highly applauds both their character and conduct. He speaks of them as the servants of the Most High, who had put their trust in God, and relied on him for deliverance. They had shown a firmness and independence that changed the king's word—they had poured such contempt upon his decrees and threatenings, that he was obliged to reverse them. They displayed such constancy and faithfulness in their religion, that rather than apostatize, they would give their bodies to be burned—"they loved not their lives unto the death," and they would rather suffer the loss of all things, even life itself, than worship any god except their own. Such is the honourable testimony borne to the character and conduct of these servants of God by the king himself, which must have had its effect in raising them in the estimation of all ranks in the kingdom of Babylon.

But farther, he makes a decree that none dare speak

against the God of these men, under the penalty of the most fearful destruction, both to themselves and to their houses; and the reason given for such a decree, enforced by such a penalty, is, that "there is no other God that can deliver after this sort." He is convinced that he is above all other gods, and above all other powers whatever, and therefore he decrees that none shall speak reproachfully or blasphemously against him, or if they dare to do so, they shall be cut in pieces and their houses made a dunghill. A question naturally occurs here: In what light are we to view this decree of the king of Babylon? Was it right or wrong? Some may be ready to think that the king went too far here, and that, in this decree, there was the same principle manifested as there was in the command given to worship his image; that it was undue authority, turned in the opposite extreme, and that the exercise of his authority on this point was as far wrong as in commanding these men to serve his gods. There can be no doubt that the interference of the authority of earthly princes, or earthly powers, in matters of religion, or in the control of the conscience, is totally opposed to the kingdom of Christ and to the laws of his kingdom. Had Nebuchadnezzar issued a decree commanding men to worship the God of Israel, with such a penalty annexed to it, he would have been wrong, and would have been acting beyond his legitimate authority. But we scarcely suppose this decree to have been of that nature. He does not impose the *worship* of God upon the conscience of his subjects, but only prohibits them from speaking any thing amiss against God; and doubtless this was overruled by the God of Israel, for the comfort, and

ease, and safety of the captive Israelites in Babylon. Often had they endured the reproaches and blasphemy of the heathen, in the land of their captivity, to which God in his providence exposed them, as a chastisement for their iniquities. They had often to bear the taunt, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." And perhaps Nebuchadnezzar was in the habit of joining in this reproach and blasphemy. But this decree was intended to prohibit all such conduct in future. It could not turn their hearts to Israel's God, but it shut their mouths from speaking against him, or annoying his worshippers with their blasphemy, which was a very great mercy and comfort to the true worshippers of God in their bondage. And to conclude the scene, the king reversed the sentence against these three men, and promoted them to higher trust and power in the province of Babylon than they had formerly occupied, which no doubt added much to their honour, and to the comfort of their brethren now among the heathen.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

1. There is nothing so foolish and unreasonable as idolatry. 2. When a fellow-creature attempts to control the conscience in acts of worship, or to enforce the profession or practice of religion by civil pains and penalties, he is assuming God's prerogative, and bringing a reproach upon religion. 3. False religion is generally attended with great outward show. 4. The faithfulness of God's servants has often excited, not only the wonder, but the wrath of persecutors. 5. Persecution for conscience' sake, generally exhibits the most

relentless rage and cruelty. 6. God's faithful servants will always find him able to deliver them. 7. In the deliverance of his people, God often confounds and destroys their enemies. 8. They that suffer for Christ have his presence and sympathy in their sufferings. 9. At one time or other, God will convince the proudest enemies that he is above them. 10. God can make his greatest enemies to praise him. 11. God is always to be obeyed rather than man. 12. God will eventually deliver all his faithful servants out of all their troubles. 13. The deliverances of God's people are instructive to the Church of God.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSES 1–3.—"Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation."

THIS chapter contains the last part of the history of Nebuchadnezzar which we have upon record. It appears to have been written by himself in the form of a proclamation or announcement to every part of his vast empire. But Daniel, as an inspired prophet of the Lord, inserts it in his history, and thus it became a part of the Sacred Volume. The narrative contains an account of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation under the mighty hand of God, and of his gracious restoration by the same agency. Perhaps there never appeared among men a more daring rival to the God of heaven than this proud monarch, and yet we find, under Divine judgments, in humble submission, he is brought to acknowledge the greatness of heaven's King, and to give him honour, and with such candour and sincerity

that many think that he was made a monument of the power and the riches of Divine grace and mercy.

In the first three verses of this chapter we have the preface or introduction to the narrative, in which Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the sovereignty and dominion of God. He begins in the usual style of royal proclamations, by prefixing his name and title—"Nebuchadnezzar the king." He addresses it to all the people of his dominions, and wishes it to be known over the whole empire, and he sends in it the salutation of peace. He tells them that he reckoned this to be his duty, in order to inform them of the great things God had wrought toward him, in humbling him by his judgments and restoring him by his mercy. He admires the doing of the Lord. He speaks as one who felt amazed in contemplating the magnitude of his signs and wonders. Until this time he had been comparatively ignorant of God's mighty operations; but now he could easily see that the dominion and power of God was far beyond his former conceptions, that his kingdom is everlasting, and his dominion cannot be overturned—it is "from generation to generation."

VERSES 4–9.—"I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed, and the visions of my head, troubled me. Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream. Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream

before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof. But at the last Daniel came in before me, (whose name *was* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my God, and in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods,) and before him I told the dream, *saying*, O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof."

This begins the narrative of the event, which appears to have happened towards the close of his reign and of his life. It is generally supposed that he survived his recovery about two years. He died, as is supposed, in the forty-fifth year of his reign. He received warning from God in a dream, regarding that calamity that was to befall him, and he had this notice given him while he was at rest and flourishing in his palace, no doubt referring to his rest from war, having conquered Egypt and subdued all his opponents. That dream sent by God made him afraid. His thoughts and the visions of his head had so much the aspect of supernatural impressions, that he was troubled by them. The terrors of the Lord can reach the mightiest monarch, even when he reckons himself most secure, and most at ease, and flourishing. As on a former occasion, he, by a decree, summoned all his wise men, the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers, that they might interpret his dream; and he brought them all together in order that they might consult among themselves, and by their united skill show him the interpretation. He told the dream before them, but they did not and could not interpret it. On a former occasion, he had forgotten his dream, and he

demanded that they should show him both the dream and the interpretation. On that occasion they insisted that he should tell the dream, and they would show the interpretation; but in the present instance, when he tells the dream, they are unable to interpret it, which shows that they were vain pretenders. Doubtless God in his providence overruled this for the manifestation of his own glory, and also to bring his own prophet into notice, and show the superiority of the spirit of inspiration to that of Chaldean divination.

It would appear Daniel was not called before the king with the magicians of Babylon, either because, perhaps, the king wished to give the honour of interpreting the dream to his own magicians, or because, Daniel being the master or governor of all the wise men of Babylon, he was not consulted until the last. He speaks of Daniel in what he would reckon a very complimentary style, which would, no doubt, be the style in which he addressed him on that occasion. But his language betrays a proneness to idolatry, notwithstanding all his former ascriptions of praise to the God of Israel. He speaks with complacency regarding the name that had been given to Daniel, according to the name of his god, *Bel;* and he speaks of Daniel and addresses him as one in whom the spirit of the holy gods was, and as master of the magicians, evidently supposing him to have been one of the greatest magicians actuated by the spirit of some fabulous heathen deities. And he reckoned him superior in skill to all other magicians, for he told him that he knew that the spirit of the holy gods was in him, and that no secret troubled

him. To him he told his dream, and requested him to tell him its interpretation.

VERSES 10–18.—"Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed: I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: the leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven: he cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him. This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee."

The object which he saw in his dream, was a tree in the midst of the earth, of great height, and seen at a

great distance: its leaves were beautiful, and on its branches was suspended an abundance of fruit for all flesh: under its shadow the beasts of the field took shelter, and the fowls of heaven lodged among its branches.

He saw, farther, a watcher—a holy one, who slumbers not—coming down from heaven, and he cried with a loud voice saying, "Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit;" so that it may neither be shelter for the beasts of the field nor the fowls of heaven. But he commanded also, that the stump or root of the tree should not be dug out, but remain in the earth, in the midst of the grass of the field, exposed to the influences of the sky, yet having for its preservation and security a band of iron and brass around it. But the watcher, in the concluding part of his injunction, gives a key which partly explains his meaning, and shows that, whoever *he* may be, it is *a man* that is prefigured by this stately tree. His portion or his food was to be with the beasts in the grass of the earth. His heart was to be changed from man's, and a beast's heart given to him. And in that horrible plight he was to continue until *seven times* pass over him.

The certainty of the matter is here asserted by the holy watcher, who pronounced the judgment upon the tree. In verse 24 we are told that this was by the decree of the Most High. It was the decree of the God of heaven, but it was approved of and attested by the angels—the watchers. Not that He needs the attestation or approval of angels to any of his decrees; but in great condescension he is sometimes represented as

summoning a council of angels in the execution of his judgments. In the midst of the host of heaven, on another occasion, he is represented as saying, "Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? and one said on this manner, and another said on that manner." So here the judgment to be executed is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: the hosts of heaven accord with the sentence, and demand, or call for its execution, which seems to have been committed into the hand of the watcher, whom the king saw in his dream.

The design of all this is here specified by this holy one. It was to convince the unthinking world that there is a God that judges—that he rules on earth as well as in heaven—that the kingdoms of men are within the range of his dominion—that kings are in his hand, and that he sets upon the thrones of this earth whomsoever he will, and that even the basest and the most wicked owe their power and position to him.

This was the dream which Nebuchadnezzar saw, and he asks Daniel to declare the interpretation of it. He acknowledges that none of his wise men can do this, but he believes Daniel to be able to do it; he had the utmost confidence in Daniel regarding this matter, as he believed that he was under the influence of supernatural agency.

VERSES 19–26.—"Then Daniel (whose name *was* Belteshazzar) was astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar

answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth: whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and it *was* meat for all; and under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: it *is* thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew down the tree, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; this *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king: that they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule."

Daniel hearing the dream related, and seeing the interpretation plainly before him, was filled with astonishment, and for one hour his thoughts troubled him, so that he could not venture to give the interpretation. That astonishment and perplexity was caused by the view that was presented to him of the fearful judgments that were about to fall upon the king, and because he who had been so highly favoured

by this monarch, should be the messenger commissioned by God to announce their approach. Doubtless it was his wish that another, and not he, had been commissioned with the message. The king perceiving his perplexity, and judging that there was something in the dream, or in its interpretation, that he was afraid to disclose, encouraged him to speak out, and tell the matter plainly, be what it may. He wished him to act honestly, and declare God's counsel plainly. Daniel answered the king in language which showed both his faithfulness in the service of God, and his loyalty toward the king. Although Nebuchadnezzar was a persecutor of the people of God, and a haughty, proud tyrant, Daniel wishes him no evil; and he shrinks at the idea of such judgments as this dream foretold falling upon the king; and he wishes that the dream and its interpretation had applied to his enemies: but, fearful as it is, he will honestly tell him the interpretation.

Daniel then tells him at once that this tree, which he saw in his dream was the king himself—that whatever the dream exhibits regarding its stateliness and beauty, or foretells regarding its destruction, Thou art the man! This figure of Nebuchadnezzar, as the monarch of Babylon, is the same with that in the description of the Assyrian, given by God in Ezekiel xxxi. "The Assyrian," says he, "was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches," &c. The varied description of the tree given by the king, is here repeated by the prophet in his interpretation, as bearing a striking resemblance to that monarch. 1. Its growth is mentioned as the figure of the increase of the power, and

glory of the reign of this monarch: "Thou art grown." 2. Its strength pointed out his power and prosperity: "Thou art grown strong." 3. Its height was the figure of his height in power and dominion above all that were around him. 4. Its sight to the ends of the earth, represented the vast extent of his dominions, and referred to Babylon as one of the wonders of the world. 5. The fairness and beauty of its leaves, represented the pomp and splendour of Nebuchadnezzar's Court. 6. Its fruit referred to the riches and wealth of his kingdom: under his reign, his whole subjects enjoyed the benefit of the riches of his kingdom. And, 7. The shelter afforded by it to the beasts of the field, and to the fowls of the heaven, intimated the protection and security enjoyed by his subjects under his reign.

In the interpretation, Daniel takes particular notice of the messenger, of the doom pronounced upon the king, and also of the message, and turns the king's attention especially to it: "And whereas the king saw a watcher," &c. This, as already noticed, appears to have been one of the heavenly host who stand before God, and are ready to go forth at his command in the execution of his purposes. They are fitly called *watchers*, inasmuch as they are constant attendants upon their Maker,—as they are ministering spirits to them who are the heirs of salvation, and as they are often employed to watch over and protect the people of God. And they are *holy ones*, inasmuch as they are perfectly pure, and conformed to the will of God in all their character and operations. The doom pronounced upon the tree by this watcher, in cutting it down and scattering

its leaves and fruit, prefigured the humiliation of this proud monarch under the judgments of God, the prostrate helplessness of his condition, and the suspension of every thing like allegiance to his government on the part of his subjects. The prophet tells him that this was the decree of the Most High, which was to come upon him. He was to be deposed from his throne, and driven from human society. He was to dwell with the beasts of the field, and to become as one of them, deprived of the use of his reason, and having the heart of a beast, for he was to eat grass like oxen. He was to be exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and wet with the dew of heaven. And this for the long period of seven years, until he was humbled and made to know that there was a God above him, and that this God was the supreme ruler, even in earthly kingdoms, and that he giveth thrones and kingdoms to whomsoever he will. But the prophet also takes notice of that part of the watcher's message, which commanded "to leave the stump of the tree roots," and tells the king that this prefigured the preservation of his throne and his kingdom for him, until the end of the *seven times*, and that it should be restored safely to him after the judgment had produced its proper effect, and when he should know that the heavens, or the God of the heaven ruled.

VERSE 27.—"Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

We have no account of the effect of this interpretation

upon the king, or how he received it. Very likely, while it fixed his attention, it would strike him with awe. And Daniel, perceiving the impression which it made upon him, and filled with awe at the judgment suspended over this guilty monarch, proceeds to tender to him his best advice—an advice most suitable and reasonable, and calculated to awaken his mind to a sense of his present condition and threatened danger. This counsel of Daniel is given with great humility and affection. He puts it in the form of a petition: "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee."—Accept of it, because it is given in true friendship and sincerity, and because it is counsel adapted to the circumstances of the case. He counsels him "to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor." It is evident that Nebuchadnezzar had been guilty of aggravated transgressions; injustice and oppression had characterized his conduct. In the administration of his government, he had acted unrighteously toward his subjects, and had been guilty of tyranny and oppression toward the poor, and especially the poor Israelites who were his captives. Daniel's counsel to him was, to change his former conduct, and act on the principles of righteousness and equity. And the reason with which he enforces this counsel is, that "it may be a lengthening out of his tranquillity." He does not say that by such a reformation of conduct on the part of the king the judgment would be prevented, for it was by the decree of the most High; but, like Ahab in another case, he might by repentance and reformation, and humbling himself at God's footstool, prevail with God to put off the evil day,

or shorten it when it comes. Even of this he does not assure him, but only gives him the hope of strong probability; such as that given by God to Israel when calling them to repentance: "It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. It may be he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him." He shows him that this was the most likely plan, at least to have the threatening modified, and the judgment mitigated.

VERSES 28–33.—"All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee: And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*."

We have no account of the king taking the advice of Daniel, or turning from his iniquities. The judgment came upon him just as Daniel had interpreted. But God confirmed the word of Daniel in the advice given to the king, inasmuch as he gave Nebuchadnezzar space to repent. In the exercise of his patience, God

delayed the judgment for a whole year, but at the end of twelve months God showed his faithfulness to his word of threatening, and visited him with the judgment according to the prediction. We have here an account of the circumstances in which this judgment was inflicted upon the king. It was in the very height of his pompous pride and vain boasting. In the unbounded pride of his heart, he magnifies his power and his majesty, but God pours contempt upon his greatness, and shows the vanity of all human glory. At the end of the year he was walking in the palace, or on the top of the palace, of the kingdom of Babylon—walking, while his eye was doubtless travelling over that extensive city, and feasting upon its grandeur—and walking with a proud and haughty step, and while he walks along, he speaks either to himself or to others who may have been his attendants, in that proud language, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built," &c. He boasts of Babylon's greatness, and truly it was a city of great magnitude and wealth; but, instead of being an excitement to watch over it with care, and rule it with justice, its greatness was made by him an incentive to pride and vain glory. He speaks as if *he* had built it. Doubtless he had enlarged and beautified it to a considerable extent, but much of it was built long ere his day. He had made it the metropolis of his empire—"the house of his kingdom." He boasts of the might of his power, as having done all this, whereas he could have done little, either in building or beautifying it without the assistance of his subjects. It was a city built for security and convenience, and for the accommodation of its inhabitants, but he boasts of it as

if he had built it wholly for the honour of his majesty. It was when he was in the very act of thus boasting of his own glory, and of the greatness of the city, while the word was in his mouth, that the decree of the Most High took effect, and the threatened judgment fell upon him; the fearful announcement of which was given by a voice from heaven, and that voice appears to have been spoken by the God of heaven, whose righteousness he had outraged, whose message he had slighted, and whose people he had oppressed. And there can be no mistake in the design of the announcement, for it is addressed directly to this proud vaunting monarch—"O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee be it spoken," and the voice is exactly in accordance with the dream, and its interpretation. It announced that he was deposed from his throne, and deprived of his kingdom—that he was to be driven from the society of men, to dwell with the beasts, and seven years to eat grass as oxen, until he was convinced that the God of heaven ruled in the kingdom of men.

As the voice from heaven declared, it was immediately executed; for the word of God is quick and powerful, whether in mercy or in judgment. He was banished from all human society—very likely, he himself hasted to get away. In an instant his reason was gone—deserted and driven away by his own servants, he took up his dwelling among the beasts of the field; his food was the grass of the earth, in common with the oxen; he was exposed to the dew by night, with which his body was wet, until his hair and his nails assumed the form and appearance of the covering of ravenous fowls. How are the mighty fallen! Is this

the man who led God's Israel captive, who reigned over the vast extent of Babylon's province—that conducted himself so proudly, that at his command nations must fall down and worship his abominable idol—now stript of all his glory, divested of every semblance of humanity, and assimilated in body and mind to the beasts that perish? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

VERSES 34–37.—"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me: and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom; and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

In these verses we have an account of Nebuchadnezzar's recovery and restoration. This happened, as predicted, at the end of the appointed time—at the end of the seven years. During that period he continued the monument of God's righteous judgment, the electric sparks of which, discharged upon the mind of the proud monarch, so blasted the mainspring of hu-

man reason, that the whole machine lay scattered in ruins, until again set up with a brighter polish, and a finer adjustment, by the hand of Him who formed it.

In giving an account of this recovery, he says, that he lifted up his eyes unto heaven—he no longer looked down on the earth as a beast, but looked up as a man; but it means also that he looked up to heaven, and to the God of heaven as a penitent, and as an humble supplicant for mercy. He became sensible of his dependence upon God, and he lifted up his eyes in a devout acknowledgment of the sovereignty, and power, and majesty, of him who reigns in heaven. We have no direct account whether he was really converted by God's grace under this dispensation; and when the Word of God is silent, we ought not to presume, or to speak decidedly; but his language and actions have something of the appearance of the conduct of a true penitent; and if so, we ought to admire the grace of God, in bringing him to repentance by such dispensations. Was not this a brand plucked out of the fire? He tells us that his understanding returned unto him, and he repeats this in verse 36. It is worthy of remark that this is the only circumstance noticed by him in all the change effected upon his constitution, evidently showing, not only his gratitude for this great mercy, but also that the change produced upon his mind or his reason, lay at the foundation of every other salutary change. It was his heart being changed from man's to a beast's; that sent him from his palace to dwell with the beasts of the field, until his body assumed the appearance of a beast; and it was the return of his reason that brought him back to the form and

glory of man. This he takes notice of, to the glory of the God of heaven. He blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him that liveth for ever. While he was deprived of the use of his reason, he could not engage in the praise of God, and it is very questionable whether he had ever done so in this manner; but no sooner does God restore him to the use of his reason, than he opens his mouth in praise to the Most High. This is the right use of reason, and, therefore, those who do not bless, and praise, and honour God, act the part of unreasonable beings. He appears now to have obtained more accurate and enlightened views of God's character than ever he had. He speaks of him as God "that liveth for ever." He is convinced of his eternity, and that he alone possesses it, and that there is no monarch that can be compared with him, for his dominion is everlasting, and his kingdom admits of no succession—it is from generation to generation. In the language of deep humility he speaks of the inhabitants of the earth, great and small, as nothing in the sight of God. He once boasted himself to be something, nay, even to be great, and even greater than the God of heaven; but now he lies low in the dust before him, and acknowledges that man is but vanity. He speaks also of God's universal dominion—it extends both to heaven and earth. The armies of heaven are numerous and powerful—thousands, myriads of mighty angels, and earth's inhabitants many and widely scattered, but he has them all under his control, and among them he does as he pleases; all are subject to his government, and accountable to him for all their actions. And when he stretches forth his omnipotent arm in any of his operations, none of them

can hold it back. His power is invincible, and no creature can arraign his procedure, or demand of him a reason for his operations, for "he gives not an account of his matters to any." None can say unto him, "What dost thou?"

Nebuchadnezzar further recounts the particulars of his restoration, to the honour and glory of that God who was the author of his mercies. He takes notice of the return of his reason, and he repeats it here; as already noticed, this lay at the foundation of all the other blessings connected with his recovery, for without this he could enjoy none of them. But he was restored to his honour and brightness, not only in the exercise of his reason, but with that reason brightened and purified from pride and vain-glory, and the whole man so dignified and honoured, that it was for the glory of his kingdom; and there is little doubt but he was henceforth a blessing and a glory to his subjects. His counsellors and great men sought unto him. During the years of his insanity, they had deserted him, although God preserved his kingdom from being seized upon by any rapacious rival. It was preserved as with a band of iron and brass; but now, when his reason, and glory, and honour returned, these great men willingly proffered their services and their loyalty to their monarch: This was no doubt the doing of the Lord, in whose hand are the hearts of kings and princes, and who can turn them, as the rivers of water, whithersoever he will. He was established in his kingdom. That kingdom from which he had been driven, was now fully restored to him, and his authority was established in it; and however great his glory and majesty

had been in former times, they were now increased. God in his providence added more excellent majesty to him; most likely the righteousness and justice with which he now administered his government, caused him to appear far more illustrious in the eyes of his subjects, for righteousness is the glory of a king, and exalts him in the estimation of his subjects. And he concludes the narrative of this remarkable dispensation, by a resolution to praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven. He praises him for all that he had done for him, and he honours him as the King of heaven, infinitely greater and mightier than all the kings on earth. His works are according to the truthful declarations of his Word, and his ways or his dealings with men are according to judgment and equity; and he is able to abase and bring low the proud and haughty. Doubtless this monarch speaks here from his own experience. He found that God's works, in punishing him, were according to the truth of his prediction, and that all his ways toward him were according to righteousness, and that he had abased and made low his proud and haughty spirit, and that by a single word from heaven.

In this striking narrative of God's dispensations toward the king of Babylon, as recorded in this chapter, we may learn the following important truths :—

1. That the most powerful and flourishing are not beyond the reach of God's arm. 2. No human skill can relieve those whom God will cast into trouble. All the wise men of Babylon could not relieve the king from his troubles. 3. The spirit of prophecy far excels the spirit of divination. 4. Angels are God's servants,

and are ever ready to obey his commands. 5. God often gives warning of his judgments ere he inflict them. 6. God's judgments are sometimes so terrible that even his own people are astonished at them. 7. God's judgments are generally continued until they produce the intended effect. 8. Turning from sin is the surest way to enjoy peace and tranquillity. 9. In the midst of threatened judgments, God sometimes exercises his patience and long-suffering. 10. God can easily abase and bring low the proudest among men. 11. To be deprived of the exercise of reason is a most fearful calamity, and should teach those who enjoy it to be grateful for such a privilege, and to improve it. 12. The chief use of our mental faculties is to praise that God who gives them, and who continues us in the use of them. 13. We ought to recognise God as the bountiful giver of all our mercies, and to give him the unfeigned gratitude of the heart for them.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1.—"Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand."

IN this chapter we have an account of what has always been reckoned one of the most important events in ancient history—viz., the taking of Babylon and the overthrow of the Chaldean monarchy, which flourished under Nebuchadnezzar, who is supposed to have reigned about 43 years. This empire had reached its height in power, in wealth, and in glory, and its highest excellency was reached immediately before its fall. The fall of Babylon was long before predicted by God's prophets. And numerous are the prophecies regarding this event recorded in the Sacred Volume, and some of these are so minute and particular, that the very name of the conqueror is given about 200 years before he was born (Isaiah xlv. 1–4): "Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the

crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." This event happened, we are informed here, in the reign of Belshazzar, who succeeded his father, Evil-Merodach, son of Nebuchadnezzar. Historians are by no means agreed regarding the dates of the reign of these monarchs, nor is it to us a matter of great importance. We are assured, upon the highest authority, that the captivity of Israel in Babylon lasted 70 years, that this captivity commenced in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar —likely toward its commencement—and that the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus happened a short time before their deliverance; consequently the death of Belshazzar must have been toward the close of the 70 years' captivity, and Daniel must have been at this time 80 or 90 years of age, and therefore, the events recorded in this chapter must have been a considerable time after those recorded in the preceding chapter. A part of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and the whole of the reign of his son and grandson, must lie between them. In the account given of this important event by the sacred historian, we have—1. The idolatrous and impious feast of the king and his courtiers; 2. The alarm and consternation into which they were cast, in the midst of their unhallowed mirth and revelry; 3. The prophetic interpretation by Daniel of the super-

natural announcement of their doom; 4. The immediate accomplishment of it. This fearful overthrow was occasioned by Babylon's haughty pride, her cruelty and oppression, and her impious mockery and blasphemy against the God of Israel.

In that memorable night in which Babylon was to be taken, and her power overthrown, we are told that Belshazzar the king made a great feast; some think in honour of his birth-day, or his coronation, or perhaps in honour of some great idol. It appears, at least, to have been some great festival at which the king and all his lords attended. Historians inform us that about two years previous to this event Cyrus the prince of Persia, a young and enterprising monarch, came against Babylon with a great army—that Belshazzar went out and fought against him, but was defeated by him in a pitched battle, in consequence of which he and his forces retired into the city, where Cyrus besieged them, and continued the siege until the city was taken. At that time, historians tell us that the city was stored with twenty years' provision; and being thus amply supplied, and strongly fortified with impregnable walls, and with the great river Euphrates running through it. Belshazzar and his friends were no doubt dreaming of the most entire safety and security. It was in these circumstances that Belshazzar made this great feast to a thousand of his lords, and honoured them by sitting down and drinking wine with them. They imagined themselves and their city to be safe from the besiegers; and so confident were they of security, that they sat down to eat and drink, and to be merry. Some historians state that Cyrus, who at this time had besieged

the city for two years, being informed of the approach of this great festival, and that the Babylonians on that occasion were accustomed to pass the whole night in drinking and debauchery, laid his scheme for attacking the city, which he on that night carried into effect by turning aside the river Euphrates from its course, and having marched his army along the bed of the river, from both ends of the city, he surprised them in the midst of their intoxication, and made himself master of it with the greatest ease. Belshazzar and his lords, however, believing themselves to be perfectly secure, sat down to their drunken debauch, in which we have a striking instance of his intemperate debauchery, and also of his daring impiety against the God of heaven. His profanity and extravagance were carried to such a height, that the richest vessels of his own palace would not suffice for drinking his wine, but he must have the golden and silver vessels of God's temple. These sacred vessels were brought from the temple of Jerusalem by his grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar, when he carried Israel captive, and they had now lain among the spoils of Babylon, untouched and unemployed for nearly 70 years, the providence of God so ordained it that they must be preserved in safety even in a heathen land, in order to be restored to their place in God's temple in his own time: these vessels were dedicated to the Lord, and, like the ark of old in the hands of the Philistines, the heathen were not permitted to break them down or deface them. But this impious monarch, in order to outrage the God of Israel, and to insult his people, commanded that these vessels should be brought, that "he and his princes,

his wives and his concubines, might drink in *them*." The plundering of the temple, and the carrying its sacred vessels down to Babylon, was a heavy rod of chastisement upon Israel; but Belshazzar added to the affliction when he used these vessels in his drunken debauch. We can scarcely conceive anything more foolish and heaven-daring than the conduct of Belshazzar at this time. He was besieged by a powerful enemy, and instead of wisely sparing the provision of the city in case of famine, he and his Court were spending it in rioting and drunkenness; and instead of humiliation and repentance, to which the threatened judgments of God called him, he was spending his time in debauchery, as if daring God to his face. But his command was not only given, but speedily executed,—the vessels of the house of God, which was at Jerusalem, were brought, very likely amid the scornful and unhallowed sport of the heathen, and their bitter reproaches cast upon God's temple, and the king and all his company drank in them! And while "they drank their wine in them, they praised their gods of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone." It is melancholy to contemplate the impious nature of this idolatrous festival, and the gradations by which it reached its daring climax; it was homage given to idols; it was homage given to idols made of no better materials than those out of which they drank their wine; it was homage given to their idol gods, in the very midst of debauchery and drunkenness—fit worshippers for such gods! and to crown the impiety of the whole, it was homage given to idols, in such a way as to pour contempt upon the God of Israel, and that contempt ex-

pressed by drinking out of the sacred vessels of his own house.

VERSES 5–9.—"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. *And* the king spake, and said to the wise *men* of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and show me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom. Then came in all the king's wise *men:* but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof. Then was the king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonied."

Often had Babylon's ruin been predicted by the prophets of the Lord, but the time was now arrived when it must be written by the pen of Heaven before the eyes of its proud monarch and his Court. Formerly it was heard in the distant voice of prophecy, but now it is imprinted in terrible characters upon the very plaster of the king's palace. The voice of their impious mirth had reached unto heaven, and cried aloud for judgment, but in one hour, and in one instant, it was silenced, and was succeeded with terror and dismay. And whence all this? Why is the night of their pleasure thus turned into fear unto them? It was not the lightning's flash, nor the thunder clap,

dashing the cup from the hand of the drunkard; nor was it a voice from heaven, shaking the foundations of the imperial palace, but only the fingers of a man's hand making their appearance, and writing upon the plaster of the wall; it was this that filled the king and his impious revellers with terror. Whether this writing was executed by the instrumentality of an angel, or directly by God himself, is an inquiry which savours more of idle curiosity than sound judgment. There is no need of seeking to be wise above what is here written, and we are assured that these supernatural fingers of a man's hand were sent forth by God himself, and that the writing was traced by them under his direction. He who could write the law for his people upon two tables of stone, could easily write the doom of Babylon upon the plaster of a wall; and one thing is certain, there was no deception in the case, it was no airy phantom, but a fearful reality, producing legible characters upon the wall of the king's palace. And this was done in such a way as to attract the notice of the impious monarch who sat at the head of this unhallowed banquet. This miraculous hand inscribed its message on the plaster of the wall, in the most conspicuous place of the banquet room, it was "over against the candlestick," and most likely over against where the king sat at the table. For although it was at the very time, and in the very hour, when their hearts were merry, and their eyes sparkling with the wine, we are told that the king distinctly perceived it. He saw not only the writing, but the part of the hand that wrote, and this unearthly sight instantly filled him with alarm; his whole outward frame indi-

cated the terror of his mind: fear was so dipicted in his countenance, that its whole aspect was changed; and the shock given to his mind, by the terrific symbol on the wall, so shattered the joints of his loins that his knees smote together. And what was the reason of all this? Why such alarm at the fingers of a man's hand, or the pen, tracing a few characters on the plaster over against the candlestick? And these too, as yet unintelligible! For aught that the king or his Court knew, if it had any meaning at all, it might be the symbol or the message of Babylon's deliverance from the besieging army; and why, then, was the king so shaken with terror? The grand secret was, "his thoughts troubled him." The guilty conscience within, touched by the finger of God, and smitten as with the secret stream of lightning, by the pencil rays of the handwriting upon the wall, spread alarm through the whole outward man. He was well aware that he was guilty, and that no message of peace or of mercy could reach him in his present position, from that God whom he had insulted, and whose sacred vessels he had profaned, How easy is it with God to make the stoutest sinner to tremble! he has only to awaken and let loose the conscience, and the whole man is filled with terror and dismay.

This extraordinary scene is calculated to afford us instruction regarding the manner in which God is to destroy mystical Babylon, under the New Testament dispensation. In the book of Revelation the Antichristian system is exhibited under this figure, not only on account of its similarity to ancient Babylon, in character and operation, but also on account of the striking

similarity to this city in its overthrow, and in the circumstances attending it. And the scene of this fearful night in ancient Babylon presents to our view, according to the New Testament prediction, a symbolic representation of the prelude to the overthrow of mystical Babylon. 1. We are informed, in this narrative, that this night of Babylon's ruin was a night of drunkenness and imagined security. Similar, we are told, will be the state of the votaries of mystical Babylon at the time of her overthrow. Her ruin will come upon her at a time when she is intoxicated with the wine of her fornication, and dreaming of safety and prosperity—"When she is saying in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." 2. In this eventful night the king and the inhabitants of Babylon appear to have been altogether heedless of the besieging army. Thus shall it be with mystical Babylon—she shall become so blindly secure, and so confident of safety, that the attacks made upon the system, by her opponents, shall be in a great measure disregarded, and that at the very time when her destruction is at hand. 3. The first symptoms of danger appeared in the terror of Babylon's rulers, occasioned by the handwriting upon the wall, over against the candlestick. It was not terror caused by the loud voice of heaven's thunder, or the war shout of an invading enemy—it was not consternation caused by the flaming sword of an angelic messenger, nor by an additional reinforcement to the army of Cyrus; but only by the simple and silent instrumentality of the handwriting upon the wall, a striking symbol of the cause of the alarm and terror which shall be felt in mystical

Babylon upon the approach of her ruin. Long has that antichristian system reigned over the world, and trampled upon the consciences and the rights of men, and long ago has its overthrow been predicted, and sometimes by various schemes has been attempted, but no alarm has filled the minds of its votaries and supporters nor has any terror seized upon them, until that powerful weapon, *the Pen*, has been wielded against her. It is the heaven-born art of writing and printing that has recorded the doom of Antichrist, and is threatening to sweep from the earth every shred of that dark and dismal system. And what has caused all that terror and alarm of late among the adherents of mystical Babylon over the continent of Europe, and which is threatening still to increase? Is it not the pen? Is it not the light and intelligence which the pen and the press have excited among Europe's inhabitants for years past? Hence the restrictions attempted to be laid upon it by every power whose machinery is regulated by the spirit of Antichrist. But, in the present day, the pen has become just like "the fingers of a man's hand," writing on the walls of the palaces of mystical Babylon, loosing the joints of the loins of her adherents, and making their knees smite together—a sure prelude of her overthrow, and an evident token that this is at no great distance.

The writing of this mysterious hand upon the plaster of the wall, appears to have been altogether unintelligible to the king and his Court. The king therefore called aloud to bring in the wise men of Babylon, that he might consult them regarding this extraordinary affair. Having made their appearance before the king,

he requests them to read the writing, and to give the interpretation; and in order to encourage them to apply their utmost skill in the matter, he offers great honour and rewards to any who could decipher the meaning of this mysterious inscription. It is highly probable that these wise men were actuated by an ambitious and worldly spirit, and the king knowing this, would naturally suit his offers to their ambition. He offers to clothe the successful interpreter in a robe of scarlet or purple—the attire of kings and princes; and to give him a chain of gold about his neck—an emblem of high honour and dignity; and to make him the third ruler in the kingdom—that is, chief minister of state, next to the king, and heir apparent. These were high offers, calculated to induce any man of ambition to exert his utmost powers in attempting to decipher the writing; but in so far as these wise men were concerned they were all in vain. They could neither read the writing, nor give the interpretation. Some think that their minds were so confused at the time, that they could not give that attention to it so as to read it. Others, that the writing was in the Samaritan or old Hebrew characters, which were unknown to them, and therefore they could not read it. While others are of opinion that they knew the letters and words, but were altogether unable to decipher their meaning, hence some render the words of this verse, "They were unable to read the writing so as to make known the interpretation to the king." Be this as it may, they were altogether unable to read and to interpret it so as to bring any meaning out of it, or to satisfy the king and his Court in this matter. This seems to have increased the king's confusion and

dismay. He expected that no difficulty could lie in the way of these wise men, but he finds himself altogether disappointed; his lords shared in the astonishment, and seemed to have been under the impression that all this foreboded some terrible calamity.

VERSES 10–12.—"*Now* the queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet-house: *and* the queen spake, and said, O king, live for ever; let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: there is a man in thy kingdom in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father, light and understanding, and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I *say*, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers; forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."

The king's wives and concubines sat with him at the feast; but the queen mentioned here appears not to have been at the banquet. She is generally supposed to have been the king's mother—Nitocris, the widow of Evil-Merodach. Historians speak of her as a woman of extraordinary prudence, and as having, at this time, the chief direction of public affairs. She, having heard of this prodigy, and of the consternation and tumult into which the Court had been thrown on account of it, came into the banqueting house, and endeavoured to soothe the mind of the king, and to compose his spirit under his fearful agitation. She bids him not be dis-

couraged although his wise men had failed in showing the interpretation of the writing; for there was a man in the kingdom who had not yet been consulted, and who was well able to read the writing, and give the interpretation, and she assures him of this,—1. From the high character which Daniel had always maintained; and, 2. From what he had already done in the days of the king's grandfather, Nebuchadnezzar. She speaks of his character, as the highest she could give him, according to the language and religion of her country—as a man possessed of the highest intelligence and wisdom, reaching even beyond the ordinary attainments of humanity, and ranking, in this respect, even among the holy gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh; and that in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, this excellent and supernatural spirit was brought to the test, in the "interpretation of dreams—showing hard sentences, and dissolving doubts," for again and again had he solved difficulties, and given interpretations to Nebuchadnezzar, which had baffled all the wise men of Babylon. And she refers to the honour which the late monarch had conferred upon him, in making him master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers, and giving him the name of his god. Thus the spirit of heavenly wisdom possessed by Daniel was mistaken, by these heathens, for the spirit of divination and soothsaying! She proposes to the king that Daniel shall be sent for, and she assures him that he would show the interpretation. It would appear from this, that Daniel, for some time previous to this, had not lived at Court, and most likely had been forgotten by the king. It is probable that he had given up office, and lived privately,

but had lived at no great distance from the king's palace. It being so ordered, in the wise arrangements of Providence, for his appearing on this particular occasion, and for the part that he was to act in the succeeding government.

VERSES 13–16.—"Then was Daniel brought in before the king. *And* the king spake, and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light, and understanding, and excellent wisdom, is found in thee. And now the wise *men*, the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not show the interpretation of the thing: and I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now, if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom."

It is evident from the account given here, that Daniel was almost unknown to Belshazzar. It might have been supposed, that his venerable age, his high character, and his former deeds and preferments under Nebuchadnezzar, would have entitled him to some notice by this monarch. But he seems to have entirely forgotten that he had such a man in his kingdom; which shows what historians assert concerning him, that he was a weak and corrupt prince, and had, to a great extent, left the management of the affairs of the kingdom to his mother, Nitocris. Daniel had to

be introduced into his presence, and, with a haughty air, the king asks him if he was that Daniel whom the king, his father (for grandfather is often called father in Scripture), brought as a captive out of Jewry—plainly intimating the little respect he had for the captives taken from the land of Israel; and that it was his last shift to apply to Daniel for relief from his difficulty. Far rather would he that his own wise men had been able to interpret the writing; but they were baffled, and he now submits to what he felt to be necessity. He tells Daniel the high character he had heard of him; that the spirit of the gods was in him, and that he possessed superior light, and wisdom, and understanding; that his own wise men had been sent for to read the writing, and to show the interpretation, but they could not; and that he had heard of him that he could interpret and dissolve such difficulties; and if he could read the writing, and make known the interpretation, he promises him the same reward that he offered to the wise men—he should be clothed in princely attire—should wear the badge of office, and be prime minister of state.

VERSES 17–24.—"Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: and for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down. But

when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: and he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but has lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou and thy lords, thy wives and thy concubines, have drank wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath *is*, and whose *are* all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Then was the part of the hand sent from him and this writing was written."

In this reply of Daniel to the king, we have perhaps one of the finest instances of noble independence, dignified wisdom, and straightforward honesty, that ever appeared in a mere man before an earthly monarch. He begins his reply by refusing—perhaps scornfully refusing—his gifts and rewards. Not that he undervalued them, or the generosity of the king who offered them, but he wishes him to know that he had not come into his presence to divine for money or earthly honours; thus showing a spirit as far exalted above the wise men of Babylon, in noble independence, as it was in wisdom and knowledge. He bids the king, if he reckoned his gifts of any value, to keep them to himself; or if he wished to bestow rewards, to give them to another, even to any of his wise men, if it was

his wish that they should possess them. This would not prevent Daniel from doing his duty, or declaring the mind of God—he would without fee or reward read the writing, and make known the interpretation.

Before doing this, however, he takes the opportunity of admonishing the king regarding his present position before that God who had written his doom on the wall of his palace, and of dealing plainly and faithfully with him regarding his conduct; and he begins by reminding him of the history of God's procedure with Nebuchadnezzar his grandfather. That he possessed a kingdom, and majesty, and honour, far greater than any other heathen monarch; that his power was extensive and irresistible—all people, nations, and languages trembled before him; and that, in the exercise of his power, he displayed the purest despotism that ever any monarch exhibited—"whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive;" and he reminds Belshazzar that all this kingdom, and majesty, and honour, was the gift of the most high God; "But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride," when he imagined and boasted that his own power and wisdom had procured him all this, when he insulted the God of heaven, and disregarded human life, he was exposed to the terrible judgments of God, and became one of the most degraded spectacles of fallen humanity. He reminds him of his grandfather's degradation and sufferings under these judgments, in being deposed from his kingdom, stripped of his honour and majesty, driven from human society, degraded to the very nature, and almost to the form of a beast, shut up to the society, and the pasturage, and the dwelling

of the beasts of the field, until, under the bleaching dews of heaven, his hair and his nails became like the feathers and the claws of the eagle. And he reminds him especially of the continuance of the judgment, until he was brought to the knowledge of a superintending providence, and that even he was under its dominion, and until he was brought to acknowledge that the Most High was the supreme ruler in the kingdom of men, and "that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will."

Having reminded Belshazzar of all this, he brings a heavy charge against himself. He tells him that though he knew all that had befallen his grandfather, he had not taken warning, nor humbled his heart before God. Instead of shunning the path that led to such fearful judgments, he had walked in the footsteps of Nebuchadnezzar, by lifting up himself against the Lord of heaven. Nay, that his sins were even more aggravated than his grandfather's, and that he had affronted the Most High more than even *he* had done. He had even brought the sacred vessels of his house into the banqueting room of his own palace, and had wickedly profaned them, by giving them into the unhallowed hands of his lords, his wives, and his concubines, to drink their wine in, and thus making the vessels of God's house to serve as drinking cups in their idolatrous and drunken festival. In connexion with this Heaven-daring profanity, he was guilty of the most abominable and offensive idolatry—with the sacred vessels of God's house in their hands, bearing the stamp of Holiness to the Lord, they praised the gods of silver, of gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which are blind,

and deaf, and lifeless, and all this while he was dependent upon the God of heaven for his life, and in whose hand were all his ways. But that God he had not glorified, but provoked and insulted to his face. Daniel having thus set the sins of the king before him, now informs him that this handwriting upon the wall was intimately connected with these iniquities, inasmuch as it was in consequence of his impious and rebellious conduct, that it had been sent forth to record his doom, "then was the part of the hand rent from him, and this writing was written." When thou hast slighted all former warnings, and set at nought all counsel given thee; when, instead of recognising and glorifying that God who so righteously and severely punished the grandfather for his pride; and when thou hast in the face of all such warning, with such heinous aggravation, insulted the God of heaven, with the sacred vessels of his house in your hands; then in these dreadful circumstances, did the God of heaven send forth this hand to write this fearful doom upon the wall:—and Daniel, pointing to the inscription on the plaster, says, "and this writing was written."

VERSES 25–28.—"And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This *is* the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

If these words are here recorded by Daniel as an exact copy of what was written on the plaster of the wall—and we have every reason to conclude that they

are so—then the writing must have been in the Chaldean language, which differs little from the Hebrew; and consequently the Chaldean wise men may have been able to read the letters, and to pronounce the words, and yet they could not read them so as to give any idea of their meaning. Indeed, the words are so concise, that unless we had an authentic interpretation of them, it would be very difficult to find out their meaning, and it must have been much more so to these Chaldeans, when their interpretation was unfavourable to their sovereign. The literal rendering of the words is—"He hath numbered, he hath numbered, he hath weighed, and they divide." What this meant was altogether beyond the comprehension of the wise men; but Daniel gives the interpretation; and he interprets as it is written on the wall. "This is the interpretation of the thing," says he to the king; MENE, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it." The word, both in Chaldee and in Hebrew, signifies to number and to finish; and Daniel tells him that it refers to his kingdom. God has numbered the days of its continuance, and according to that number he hath brought it to its termination. Long has the Babylonish monarchy continued and increased in wealth and power, but God has a time set for its continuance, and that time is now at an end. And the word is repeated, which, like Pharaoh's dream, shows that the thing is certain and established by God. TEKEL, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." In the Chaldee this word signifies "weighed," and in the Hebrew "too light." Wicked men are sometimes compared to silver, adulterated with baser metals, which

render it too light when put in the balance. Such was this king, and such were his actions when weighed in the balances of divine equity. "UPHARSIN," or "PERES," in Chaldee, signifies to divide, and in Hebrew it signifies the Persians; and in the interpretation Daniel puts them both together—"Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians," that is, his kingdom was to be rent from him, and given as a prey to the Medes and Persians, to be divided between them.

VERSES 29-31.—"Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and *put* a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being* about threescore and two years old."

We have no account of Belshazzar making any reply to Daniel's interpretation of the writing; and although he must have been fearfully dismayed, he does not appear to have been offended at Daniel, but rather convicted in his own conscience he answered nothing. But, on the contrary, commanded that the promise made to him should be fulfilled, and the reward which he had offered him, should now be bestowed. And according to his command it was done. He was arrayed in the robes of authority and office, and even at that untimely hour, a proclamation was made that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. Daniel had told the king that he regarded not his gifts as a price for his interpretation of the writing, but now, when the

king is resolved that his promise shall be fulfilled, he refused them not, but looked upon them as the tokens of the favour of his prince, at the same time being well aware that the possession of them was to be but of short duration, and that they would perish with him who bestowed them. It is also worthy of notice here, that Daniel did not call upon Belshazzar to repent and turn from his sins, as he did his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, on a former occasion; very likely he saw that the time for that was over, the doom having gone forth against him, written in characters upon the wall, which nothing could deface but the overthrow of the palace, and the revolution of the empire of Babylon.

In that night the city was taken by Cyrus, in the manner we have already stated, by the stratagem of turning aside the waters of the River Euphrates, and marching his soldiers along the bed of the river from both ends of the city. Historians inform us that in that night of revelry and debauchery, the gates upon the ends of the streets, along the river, were, through carelessness, left open, and thus the whole city became an easy prey to Cyrus; and in that night the king and all his nobles were slain in the midst of their feasting and drinking. Zenophon relates, "that two deserters, having assisted some of the Persian army to kill the guards and seize upon the palace, they entered into the room where the king was, whom they found in a posture of defence, but was soon dispatched, with his attendants." And thus the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled (chap. ii.), that Babylon should be taken in a night of great feasting and revelry, while her princes and great men, her captains, her rulers, and mighty

men, should be drunken, and should sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awaken.

The result of this was, the kingdom of Babylon falling into the hands of the Medes and Persians. We are here informed that Darius the Median took the kingdom; or, as some think, Cyrus took possession of it in the name of Darius his uncle and father-in-law, on whose death, two years after, he succeeded to the whole power and authority. They were partners in the war, and in the conquest of the city, but in the possession of the kingdom, Cyrus gave Darius the precedence. At this time we are told he was about 62 years of age. According to this he must have been born in the eighth year of the captivity, or in that year when Jeconiah and all the nobles of Israel were carried captive. Thus, in the adorable providence of God, at the very time when Israel was led captive by their enemies, a prince was born who was destined to relieve them. Truly He is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. Some are of opinion that Belshazzar was slain, during his impious festival, by conspirators, and that Babylon was taken by Cyrus about seventeen years after, during a certain feast, when the viceroy appointed by Darius had rebelled; and this view they endeavour to support by historical, although doubtful, authority. But we rather hold the view generally adopted—that the city was taken by Cyrus on that night when the king was slain—as the one most conformable with Scripture narrative and prediction.

The following remarks are deducible from this chapter:—

1. Sacrilege, or the profanation of sacred things, generally fills up the measure of men's iniquity, and often brings the judgments of God upon the sinner, even in this world. 2. The word of God touching the conscience is calculated to make the most daring sinner tremble. 3. God's arm revealed must be terrible to the wicked, when his finger fills them with alarm. 4. There is no help from creatures, when God turns against the sinner. 5. Ofttimes the best of men are overlooked by the world. 6. Some who despise God and his servants in the day of prosperity, are often found seeking after them in the day of adversity. 7. When a sinner's conscience is awakened, he would purchase deliverance from it at any price. 8. It is a truly noble spirit that will do his duty independently of bribe or reward. 9. God's servants ought to be faithful in warning sinners of their sin and danger. 10. They that follow in the sinful ways of their fathers, bring upon themselves swift destruction. 11. To go on in sin against warnings and judgments inflicted upon others, is high aggravation. 12. It is great wickedness to give the praise which is due to God to graven images. 13. God, in his Word, writes the doom of impenitent sinners in legible characters. 14. God will deal with sinners according to the balance of eternal justice. 15. They that are found wanting in God's balance shall be given a prey to their greatest enemy. 16. God's threatenings against impenitent sinners will assuredly be executed. 17. God will overturn every Babylonish system that has oppressed and persecuted his own heritage.

CHAPTER VI

VERSES 1–3.—"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel *was* first; that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm."

THIS chapter furnishes us with a part of Daniel's history under the reign of Darius the Median, and in that part of his history there is recorded an account of one of the darkest and most diabolical plots that ever was laid, by the agents of Satan, against the life of a righteous and honourable man, and of that man's wonderful deliverance by the God in whom he trusted. Here we see how Daniel "by faith stopped the mouths of lions," and not only obtained a good report, but a victory over his enemies. It is well observed by one, that "the three children were cast into the fiery furnace for not committing a known sin, Daniel was cast into the lion's den for not omitting a known duty;

and God's miraculous delivering both them and him is left upon record for the encouragement of his servants in all ages, to be resolute and constant, both in their abhorrence of that which is evil, and their adherence to that which is good, whatever it cost them." Darius, having succeeded by conquest to the crown of Babylon, upon the death of Belshazzar, which death terminated the Chaldean monarchy, began to new-model the government, and to connect the Babylonish empire with his own; and thus, according to the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the monarchy passed from the head of gold into the breast and arms of silver. The Medo-Persian empire seems at this time to have been divided into one hundred and twenty provinces, which were afterwards enlarged by the victories of succeeding monarchs, to one hundred and twenty seven. According to the number of these provinces, Darius set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty princes. To these princes Darius committed the authority and management of the affairs of the whole kingdom. Over these were appointed three presidents, and in order to secure the proper management of the kingdom, and that the king should suffer no loss, either in his revenue, or in the administration of justice; these princes were to give in their accounts to the three presidents. Of these three Daniel was the first, or the chief. The reason of this preference given to Daniel, was his high mental qualifications for the office—"an excellent spirit was in him." This was soon perceived by Darius, who seems to have been very acute in discerning such matters. Daniel had risen to great power and honour under the former government, and he had even to old age

maintained a character for wisdom, prudence, and straightforward honesty, unrivalled among the nobles and wise men of the kingdom. A man possessing such a spirit, such qualifications, and such experience, soon attracted the notice of Darius, who, in his anxiety for the public welfare and prosperity of his kingdom, wisely and prudently chose such men for his government. He was not like those weak princes who often endanger the stability of their throne, by surrounding it merely with their friends and flatterers, but he chose men who were best qualified and fitted for their office. In this also there is to be seen the goodness of God in his providence toward his people Israel, by raising Daniel so high in the kingdom of Darius, at such a time as this, when the crisis of their deliverance was approaching. For Darius seems to have been so highly pleased with Daniel's spirit and conduct, that "he thought to set him over the whole realm," and to commit the whole management of the affairs of his kingdom into his hand.

VERSES 4–9.—"Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault: forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God. Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governers, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall

ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree."

Daniel having been thus advanced by his sovereign to be the second person in the empire, soon became the object of the jealousy and envy of the other courtiers; and we have here an account of their hatred against him, and of their wicked conspiracy against his life. The occasion of this envy and hatred appears to have been his faithfulness, and accuracy, and integrity in the management of public affairs, and very likely his strict scrutiny of their conduct and accounts. They watched his conduct, and had their spies upon all his actions, with the design of detecting some error in his conducting the affairs of the kingdom. In this "they sought to find occasion against him," but they could find none. The faithfulness and integrity of his conduct rendered all hope of finding occasion against him "concerning the kingdom," utterly vain, and their own acknowledgment of this, reluctlantly set their seal to the integrity of his character. They confessed to one another, in their consultations against his life, that it was beyond their power to find any occasion against him, unless it was in some matter "concerning the law of his God." They found him to be a man not only of integrity, wisdom, and prudence, but a man of genuine piety, and as faithful in the service of his God as he was in the service of his king. We might be ready to imagine that such a conviction would have produced in

them, not only veneration and awe, but love and esteem for the man who possessed a character so noble, so upright and honourable. But, instead of this, their envy appears to have been wrought up into deeper malignity. It was not only cruel, but diabolical. They laid their schemes not only against him, but against the law of his God; and in addition to all this, they laid their plan so as to draw their king unto the snare, and to involve a benevolent, upright, and patriotic monarch, in their diabolical scheme against the life of this righteous man. Hitherto, Daniel's religion had been no bar to his preferment in the kingdom of Darius. There was no law requiring him to conform to the king's religion, nor any law forbidding his preferment, if he did. He appears to have had full liberty to worship the God of Israel according to his conscience, and according to God's own institutions. But these wicked men resolved that a law shall be passed, which shall interfere with this liberty of conscience, and which shall render that worship to the God of Israel, in which they knew Daniel was faithful—a crime against the state; and to cover their deep design, and their dark malignity, they moulded their law, which they presented to the king for his sanction and approval into the form of high compliment and respect to the king himself, while it was so cautiously expressed in so general terms, that even the sagacity of Darius could not detect the particular bearing it had toward his faithful servant Daniel. These men having "gathered themselves together against the soul of the righteous," and having "framed mischief by a law," to "condemn the innocent blood," presented themselves before the king with the usual

compliment of loyalty, "King Darius, live for ever," and intimated to him that all the presidents, governors, and great men of the kingdom, had consulted together, and agreed to make and establish a royal statute and firm decree, "that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." In the framing of this decree, there is doubtless much skill and cunning displayed by its authors, in concealing their real design, by a specious generality in its purpose, and an abject flattery of the monarch; but there are rents in the covering, through which may be seen here and there protruding the poisonous fangs of the deep and dismal purpose that lurks underneath; and the wonder is, that the discernment of this sagacious monarch did not perceive it; but few kings are altogether proof against the cunningly devised flatteries of their courtiers. There is—1. To be seen here an evident falsehood or misrepresentation in their statement to the king. They pretend that the decree drawn up, and now presented to him for his approval, was unanimous, and that *all* the presidents had agreed to it, while there is no account of Daniel, the chief of the three presidents, being in their assembly, or being at all consulted in the matter. It was not to be supposed, then, that he could have agreed with it. 2. It was putting the king out of his place, by a solemn caricature on his prerogative, as if he stood in the place of God, and even of their own gods, and were the sole benefactor of his subjects—could hear all their petitions and grant all their requests for thirty days. 3. It was cruel and oppressive, and even impolitic—it prevented men asking petitions for

thirty days, from any of their fellow-creatures, even although their trade, and commerce, and their comfort depended on it. 4. It was an impious interference with the conscience, by preventing prayer being made to God—even to their own gods. But it was this impious and unjust part of the decree that was intended to reach the case of Daniel, and to involve him in disobedience to their iniquitous law, and the horrid penalty annexed to the statute was being cast into the den of lions. This decree they presented to the king for his sanction and signature, which signature, according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, rendered it irrevocable. This seems to have been a part of the constitution of the united empire of Media and Persia, that a law signed and ratified by the reigning monarch could not be altered, nor the breach of it pardoned. This absurdity in legislation sometimes brought the existing government into difficulties. On a future occasion, in this very kingdom, we find Ahasuerus in a similar difficulty to that of Darius here, on account of this attribute of the Medo-Persian law. Having at the suggestion of wicked Haman condemned the Jews throughout his dominions to destruction, and having ordered their execution, Ahasuerus, in order to prevent this unalterable decree from taking effect, had to issue a new statute, empowering the Jews to defend themselves against the executioners of the previous order, and to avenge themselves on their enemies.

We are informed that king Darius was taken in their snare—he signed the writing at their request, and thus ratified the deed, and he did so without the least idea that it would so soon and so fearfully be em-

ployed against the greatest and most faithful man in his kingdom—his beloved Daniel.

VERSES 10–17.—"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask *a petition* of any god or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, the thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not. Then answered they, and said before the king, that Daniel which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day. Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is*, that no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed. Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. *Now* the king spake, and said unto Daniel, thy God, whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee. And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."

We have here an account of Daniel's disobedience

to this unrighteous decree. Instead of taking means to evade its operation, he continued his accustomed practice in direct opposition to the statute. Some might be ready to suppose that Daniel might have retired during these thirty days to some secret place and worshipped his God, or he might have shut himself up in some secret place in his own house for the time, and thus evaded this unrighteous decree. It is very true that, in ordinary circumstances, Daniel, without any scruples of conscience, might have changed his place and mode of prayer; but had he done so at this time, knowing of this decree against him, it would have been so far yielding to the decree, and would have brought upon him a strong suspicion that he had complied with it, and given up the worship of God altogether for that time, which inconsistency and unfaithfulness his enemies would not have been slack to turn against him. But when he knew that the writing was signed, he fearlessly and resolutely continued his usual practice. He saw that he had now a fair opportunity of honouring God before men, and of showing that he preferred God's favour and his service to life itself. And in all this he appears to have been the more determined in that he saw that the statute was levelled against him. In spite of every temptation to the contrary—and these were many and great—he went to his house, and worshipped God in his usual manner. The manner of Daniel's worship here, is both instructive and exemplary. 1. It was his custom—"as he did aforetime;" he was no stranger to this exercise, but like every genuine saint, it was his daily practice. 2. It was in his own house—in the midst and in the presence of his

domestics—it was family worship. 3. It was devotional gratitude. Daniel was a man of prayer, and in every prayer he gave thanks to God for his mercies. 4. It was worship in the most solemn and devotional attitude—upon his knees with humble reverence before his Maker. 5. It was frequent, not only his daily exercise, but three times a day—at evening, morning, and at noon, according to the example of David. The oftener we come to the throne of grace, we are the more welcome. We can never weary God with our supplications, nor exhaust his fulness with our requests. 6. It was worship performed openly and avowedly, at the open windows of his chamber—he was not ashamed of his religion, nor afraid to confess his God before men; and 7. It was at the window of his chamber that looked toward Jerusalem—with his face directed toward God's house and God's city, although in ruins. Not only that Jerusalem and the temple of the Lord might have an interest in his prayers, but because it was the place where God had his residence in times that were past—because it was the custom in Israel to worship toward God's temple, and especially because of the intimation which God gave to Israel in answer to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, that if his people should be carried captive, and in the land of their enemies should pray unto him, with their eye toward that house at Jerusalem, he would hear and maintain their cause. And there is little doubt, but, in the faith of this, Daniel at this time prayed with his face toward Jerusalem, and the result showed that he did not cry in vain.

The enemies of Daniel were soon made aware of his resistance to their unrighteous decree, and of his resolution to worship God according to his accustomed practice, even at the risk of his life. Either they had their spies watching his conduct, and ready to report, or they were aware of his stated hours of prayer, and knew when to find him making his request to God. These men came to his house, and found him in the act of praying and making supplication before God. They assembled at his house in a tumultuous rage, as the word literally signifies, like beasts of prey seizing their victims, and having found him presenting his petition to God, they immediately went to the king in order to have measures adopted for the destruction of Daniel. They rejoiced that they had now found occasion against him, and they lost no time in accusing him to the king. In their cruel and crafty plot against the life of Daniel, and in order to make sure their purpose, they appeal to the king regarding the existence of the statute lately passed, prohibiting every man from asking a petition of any god or man for thirty days, except from the king, upon the penalty of being cast into the den of lions. The king acknowledged that it was true, and that according to the unalterable law of the Medes and Persians. Having thus got the king to certify the fact, they instantly accuse Daniel of wilfully disregarding the law, and rebelling against the king his master; and they charge him with the aggravation of repeating his acts of rebellion, "making his petition three times a day;" and in order to prejudice the king against him, and to injure his character as far as in their power, they speak of Daniel

and of his petitions in the most reproachful and contemptuous style—"He is of the children of the captivity of Judah"—a poor forlorn captive belonging to a despicable tribe, who lives by the suffrage of Babylonish authority, and yet would brave the power of the king of Babylon, and dare him to his face, by petitioning his God in the very face of a royal statute. This is the man, O king, who sets at nought all your authority, and dispises your enactments. The king, hearing these statements of his courtiers, became greatly alarmed, and he now began to see the secret of the unrighteous decree. He now perceived plainly that their design in making this law, was not in honour to him, but in spite at Daniel, that it was not so much to support his authority as to destroy this righteous man, and he felt sore displeased with himself in so foolishly and simply giving way to their request, in signing the decree, and he immediately turned his thoughts toward Daniel, and to the possibility of delivering him from the power of his enemies. The statute was according to their common law, fixed and unalterable; none could deny that Daniel was found contravening the statute, and therefore no law, not even the king's word, despotic as he was, could alter it; and yet this monarch seeing the wickedness of the scheme, and having such a love and respect for Daniel, set his mind to work, in order to contrive some plan of deliverance for him; casting aside every other occupation in his sphere of government, "he laboured to deliver him, till the going down of the sun;" and there is little doubt but he did so, both by authority and persuasion with Daniel's accusers, in order to induce them to dispense with the execution

of the sentence. How dreadfully must the generous mind of this monarch have been racked and torn with the perplexing thought, that, without consideration, or examination into the design or bearing of the decree, he had signed the writing, the dark and hidden purpose of which was to take away the life of the first president of his kingdom—a man more righteous and better than all his accusers. These men, however, were relentless. They again assembled unto the king and insisted upon the irrevocable nature of the law, with a spiteful rage and cruelty, which appeared equally unalterable, and they demand that in the present case it shall be executed, and they insinuate that any alteration of the decree of the king would be a violation of his own authority, and a stain upon his honour. "No decree or statute," say they, "which the king establisheth may be changed." Such was this decree, and therefore the seal to its immutability had been affixed to it by his own hand. This part of the Medo-Persian constitution was both impolitic and unjust. It proceeded upon the principle that the monarch was infallible, while at the same time it hampered him in the exercise of his prerogative, and prevented him from exercising his royal clemency and mercy, in the pardon of a criminal; and it also paved the way for such unrighteous decrees as the one under consideration. The king, finding that all his exertions in behalf of Daniel were in vain, his own deed and the law of his kingdom being against him, and seeing that there was no human power that could deliver him, is forced, evidently with great reluctance, to give orders that this unjust decree shall be put in execution. He commanded that Daniel

should be brought, and cast into the den of lions. Wild beasts were often kept by kings as an appendage to the royal establishment, and were sometimes publicly exhibited in revolting and bloody encounters with one another, for the gratification of that horrid taste which always characterizes a state of savagism and barbarity. But they were often employed by some governments in the execution of the sentence of death upon notorious criminals, who were cast to them in order to be devoured, which was generally accounted among the most dreadful punishments that could be inflicted. In casting Daniel into the den of lions, then, he was treated as the worst of criminals, and his enemies showed their most violent malignity and rage; and in order to render sure his destruction, and prevent the possibility of escape, a stone was laid upon the mouth of the den, and that stone sealed with the king's own signet; and so determined were these men on Daniel's destruction, that they would not even trust to the king's signet, lest, perhaps, the king might open the den in their absence, but they must have it sealed with their own. All this precaution was taken "that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel." In these trying circumstances, Darius encourages Daniel to trust in God, in the confidence that he would deliver him. He knew that it was for serving his God that he was cast into the lion's den, and that the God whom he served was able to deliver him; and finding his deliverance beyond the reach of his own power, he casts him upon God's mercy, in the confidence that he would, in some way or other, deliver him.

VERSES 18–23.—"Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of music brought before him; and his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: *and* the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."

The mouth of the den being secured, the king retired to his palace, highly displeased with himself, and deeply grieved for his servant Daniel; and the more so, because, by his own hand he had rivetted the unjust and cruel sentence. His grief was so heavy that his sleep departed from him, and he refused to be comforted. He would allow no instruments of music to be brought before him, but spent the whole night in fasting and mourning. Anxiously waiting the dawn of the morning, he arose early, and went in haste to the lions' den. He had still some hope that the God whom Daniel served would interfere in his behalf, and deliver him from a sentence so unjust. And that he might learn the result speedily, he sends not, but went himself in haste to the den. And when he came unto the den he cried with a loud and lamentable voice unto

Daniel, expecting that he was safe, yet fearing the contrary. He calls him by name, and addresses him as the servant of the living God, and he asks him if his God, whom he served continually, was able to deliver him from the lions. He had formerly encouraged Daniel, by stating that his God was able to deliver him; and, therefore, this question referred not so much to God's ability to deliver, as to the fact of the deliverance. His inquiry is whether God had seen meet to deliver him, and if he was really safe. Daniel knew the voice of the king, and instantly replied in language that assured the king of his safety; and doubtless the king rejoiced at the welcome tidings. Daniel does not blame the king for the part he had acted, for he well knew that he had been ensnared, but he speaks to him in respectful language—"O king, live for ever." And he tells him that his God had sent his angel, and shut the lions' mouths, and prevented them from hurting him. These ferocious creatures were under the power of God, and by a miraculous interposition he had prevented them from injuring his servant Daniel. Some think, and with some degree of probability, that the angel who delivered Daniel was the same that was seen walking with the three children in the fiery furnace—one like unto the Son of God. But to inquire curiously into this matter serves no good purpose. God is the great author of his deliverance, and he who could make the fiery furnace a pleasant walk to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, could easily make the lions' den a place of rest and safety to Daniel. Darius, with an accusing conscience, could find no rest or sleep in a royal palace;

but Daniel, with the presence of God, could find quietness, comfort, and rest in a den of lions. His safety proved his innocence and integrity, and was the result of these. He does not plead absolute innocence before God, for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not; but before God he was innocent of any crime with which his enemies could charge him. And also before God he was guiltless in the matter of disloyalty and disobedience. In God's presence he could appeal before the king that he had done no hurt to his government or authority. Though he disobeyed his decree, it *was not* out of contumacy, but purely to preserve a good conscience. The king was then exceeding glad to find Daniel alive and unhurt. He rejoiced to find that that unrighteous decree, into the ratification of which he had been entrapped, had been set aside by a higher power, and that Daniel was now safe from its operation; and he immediately commanded that Daniel should be taken out of the den, and this being done, there was no hurt found upon him. He was untouched, either by the teeth or the paw of the lions, "because he believed in his God." While the angel of the Lord was the agent, faith was the means of stopping the mouths of lions.

VERSE 24.—"And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives: and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den."

Darius, having taken Daniel out of the lions' den,

and being convinced of his innocence, and of his enemies' malignity against him, now awards the same punishment to his accusers which they intended for Daniel—"He commanded, and they brought those men that had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions." Evidently the righteous retribution of Heaven upon these wicked men. But there is a part of this commandment which has the appearance of undue severity. Their wives and their children were commanded to be cast in with them into the den. This was doubtless according to the cruel laws and customs which prevailed in some countries, of involving whole families in the punishment of individuals. It was in opposition to that righteous law of God, "that the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own iniquity." But, in conformity with this, God often visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him; that is, the judgments of God are justly inflicted upon the offspring of sinners, if their children walk in the sinful paths of their fathers. And perhaps there might be something of the application of this principle in the case before us. It may be that these families had a deep hand in the condemnation of Daniel. It may be that the wives and children of Daniel's accusers assisted in spying out his conduct, and urging these men to frame both the decree and the accusation against him, and there can be little doubt but they acquiesced in the execution of it, and, consequently, in the righteous providence of God, they shared in the punishment. Similar cases we have in the

history of Achan and of Haman. We are told that the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces ere they reached the bottom of the den. In the case of Daniel, God had the mastery of the lions, so that they could not hurt him; but in the case of his accusers, he removed the restraint, and gave the lions the mastery over them, in consequence of which they were completely destroyed. Some historians assert that Daniel's accusers, seeing themselves outwitted, and their scheme baffled by the preservation of Daniel, denied the miracle, and maintained that his preservation was owing to the lions being largely supplied with flesh by the orders of the king, previous to his being cast into the den, and that the king had done this secretly, in order to satisfy their appetite, and prevent them from destroying Daniel; but that the king, in order to prove the falsehood of this assertion, commanded the lions to be filled with flesh, ere these men, with their families, were cast into the den, and that, notwithstanding of this, they tare them in pieces ere they reached the bottom of the den. But be this as it may, the power and mercy of God were abundantly displayed in the miraculous preservation of Daniel, and his righteous judgment in the overthrow of his enemies. Daniel was spared, not because the lions had no appetite, but because God withheld them from using it, and very likely their being miraculously restrained from touching Daniel made them the fiercer against his persecutors.

Verses 25–28.—"Then king Darius wrote unto all people,

nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he *is* the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his kingdom *shall be even* unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

In these verses we have an account of the decree published by Darius to all the people of his dominions, in consequence of this extraordinary deliverance of Daniel. Not only out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, but sometimes out of the mouths of heathens, God perfects praise. Darius had done dishonour to God and injustice to Daniel, in casting him into the den of lions, but now he resolves to honour God, and Daniel his servant. He made a decree, and he wrote and published it "to all nations and languages that dwell in all the earth," which means all the people in his extensive dominions. It may be that while he wrote to the people of his own dominions, he wished it to be promulgated throughout the world, and perhaps it was a prophetic announcement of what we are assured *shall be*—"Peace multiplied," and men universally fearing "before the God of Daniel;" and this preface to his decree is most appropriate, for it is only by the fear of God that true peace can be maintained. Some might be ready to question the lawfulness of such a decree as this, enjoining all the people in his realm to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. His people were worshippers of idols, and was not this

something like interfering with the conscience? It is true that the interference of civil powers in matters of religion has always been attended with pernicious consequences, but we are not disposed to view this decree of Darius as such an interference. It is not to be understood as a *compulsory* decree to worship God, but an injunction to fear God sent forth with all the influence of the character and office of the reigning monarch. Hence we find it was not enforced by any direct penalty. Nebuchadnezzar enforced his decree against insulting or reproaching God, with a penalty: whosoever did so were to be cut in pieces, and their houses made a dunghill. But in this decree of Darius there is no penalty mentioned, nor was there any decree along with it for the suppression of idolatry, plainly intimating that it was not compulsory, so far as civil pains and penalties were concerned. But he instructs and enjoins them to worship the true God, and what is still more remarkable, he gives forth this decree in gospel language. It is the very language of the angel of the gospel in Rev. xiv. 7: "Fear God, and give glory to him." Perhaps a distant intimation of the introduction of the gospel among heathen nations in after times, or the first rays of its light dimly shining into these benighted realms.

The reasons given for this fear and adoration are very powerful; and these reasons are taken from the character and works of God, and especially from that deliverance which he had wrought for his servant Daniel: "He is the living God." The gods of the heathen are lifeless idols, but our God has life in himself, and is the author and fountain of all life. "He

is stedfast for ever." He himself is unchangeable, and his throne and his dominion are stable and sure. His kingdom and his dominion shall not be overturned, but shall continue for ever. "He delivereth and rescueth." He is omnipotent, and Daniel is an instance of his delivering those who trust in him. He does things far above the power or the comprehension of his creatures, whether in heaven or in earth, and he has given, also, an instance of these wonders in the deliverance of Daniel from the power of the lions. Such is the declaration given regarding the greatness and power of God, by one of the greatest monarchs that ever lived, as a powerful reason why men of all nations should tremble and fear before the God of heaven. This part of the history concludes with an account of Daniel's prosperity. He was now honoured by the king, his enemies were removed, of which they themselves were the occasion. He became a greater favourite with the sovereign, and in higher reputation among the people, and thus he had the greater opportunity of doing good to his brethren in captivity. Daniel continued in prosperity and in power during the time that Darius held the kingdom, and also under his successor Cyrus, and it is generally supposed that he did not return with his brethren to Judea, but lived and died at a good old age in Babylon.

The following practical remarks are suggested from this chapter:—

1. It shows great wisdom and prudence in kings to set wise men, and properly qualified, over the affairs of their kingdom. 2. It is the duty, as well as the

honour, of those who are set in places of trust, to be faithful. 3. The best of men have sometimes been envied by the wicked, and exposed to the bitter shafts of malice. 4. Persecutors are always very cruel and relentless. 5. They that faithfully serve God he will deliver. 6. Men, through flattery and inconsideration, may be led into conduct which may cost them bitter reflection and regret afterwards. 7. God is able to disappoint the designs of all his people's enemies. 8. God often turns the violent dealings of the wicked upon their own head. 9. Associates in sin may be made associates in punishment. 10. The fear of the Lord is a duty incumbent upon all people. 11. Right views of God's character and operations are calculated to promote the fear of God. 12. It is the blessing of the Lord that renders a man truly prosperous.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 1–8.—"In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, *and* told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake, and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and *it had* three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night-visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."

We now come to that part of the book of Daniel which may strictly be called prophetic, the former part, although involving some important predictions, being chiefly historical. In the former part of the book, the prophet relates some remarkable events in the history of himself and of his brethren in Babylon, and also in the history of that powerful and despotic empire. In this latter part of it, he records these striking predictions, given him in vision, which unveil many of God's purposes in his dispensations toward his Church, and toward the world to the end of time.

In this chapter Daniel gives an account of a very remarkable dream which he had in the visions of his head upon his bed, in which was exhibited to the prophet, in striking symbols, a comprehensive view of God's future procedure toward his Church and toward the world. The date of this dream appears to have been considerably earlier than the close of the preceding narrative. It was in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, and consequently must have happened previous to the events recorded in the two preceding chapters, and as some suppose, about seventeen years before Daniel was cast into the den of lions. Daniel had been, by God, the honoured instrument of interpreting the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and now God favours him with a dream, in which are seen depicted, under different symbols and in bolder relief, the same events that were disclosed in Nebuchadnezzar's first dream—the image broken in pieces by the stone cut out of the mountain. It may be noticed here, that a dream or vision, was one of these "diverse manners," referred to by the apostle, in which

God was pleased to communicate his mind to his ancient prophets; and the prophet Daniel appears to have been specially favoured in this. This dream seems to have made such a deep impression upon his mind, that he wrote it down for the benefit of the Church and of future generations, and he told the sum of the whole matter to his brethren in Babylon for their instruction and edification.

In this night-vision, his attention was arrested by the appearance of a dreadful sea-storm, upon an extensive ocean, occasioned, not by the ordinary blast of the gale or the hurricane, sweeping along its surface, and raising its swelling waves, but by the four winds of heaven let loose, blowing from east, west, north, and south at the same time, meeting together and striving against each other in fearful combat, upon the bosom of the deep, and not only elevating its surface into huge billows, but making them lash against each other in frightful commotion. Out of this troubled and terrific sea the prophet saw four monstrous beasts arise, and these were diverse one from another. This terrible sea-storm appears to be the symbol of great commotions in the world, and of that agitated state of society, out of which these four monarchies arose, of which these four beast were the symbols, called in verse 17, "four kings which shall arise out of the earth." In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the same monarchies are symbolized by the four great divisions of the image—the head, the breast and arms, the belly and thighs, and the legs and feet. In this vision of Daniel, they are exhibited under the figure of four monstrous beasts, each differing from its fellows. The

figure bears a striking similarity to that presented to John in the isle of Patmos, when he had a symbolic representation of the great Antichristian powers that persecuted the Church of Christ; and such earthly persecuting powers are fitly represented by this figure, on account of their ferocious and destructive nature, in which they often display more of the cruel propensities of the beasts of prey than of the principles of humanity.

These four beasts, which appeared to the prophet coming up from this stormy sea, were diverse one from another, denoting, that although all these monarchies partook of the savage and destructive nature of the wild beast, yet the genius and complexion of their government was to be different, and carried on by different modes of operation. The prophet does not furnish us with any account of the date of the rise of these empires. Some think the successive rising up of these beasts, seen by the prophet, marks the time of the juncture of each kingdom with the preceding one; that the rising up of the bear from the sea, was at the time when the Persian succeeded the Babylonian Empire; but Faber thinks that their rise or first appearance here marks the period of their commencement, and not the time at which they succeeded each other. But this is of very little importance, nor does the inquiry at all assist us in the understanding of the prophecy contained in the vision.

The first beast seen by Daniel rising out of the storm, was the symbol of the Chaldean monarchy,—the same with the head of gold on the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. It is here compared to a lion for its fierceness, its strength, and power, as well as for its

devouring propensities; and it had eagle's wings, denoting the swiftness and rapidity of its conquests; and when we see in that empire strength and swiftness combined—the form of the lion with the wings of the eagle—we need not be surprised at the height to which it rose among the nations of the earth. This monarchy appears to have been among the most ancient as well as the most powerful in the world. It was founded by Nimrod, about the year of the world 1757, and about 2323 years before Christ, and continued its increase in power and splendour until the days of Nebuchadnezzar, when its wings were plucked, as was seen by the prophet in vision, and a stop put to the progress of its victories by Cyrus and Darius for twenty years before its final overthrow. We are further told that it was lifted up from the earth, &c.; that is, it was prevented from treading down its opponents in the dust to the extent which it had done before; or, as some read the words, "by which it was lifted up from the earth;" that is, "these wings by which it was lifted up from the earth, and enabled to fly swiftly, were plucked," and thus checked in its progress of conquest and devastation, the sense is the same: and when it is added, that it was "made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart given to it," it intimates the great change that obtained in the spirit of the administration of that empire under Nebuchadnezzar, when, in the latter part of his reign, the cruelty and savage character of the empire seems to have been changed, and his character and government more imbued with mildness and humanity.

The second beast, which was seen by the prophet

rising from the sea, was like to a bear. It was the symbol of the Persian monarchy which succeeded the Chaldean. It is the same with the breast and arms of silver in the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Its nature was that of a bear. Less powerful than the Chaldean monarchy, but no less ravenous, it raised itself up against the Chaldean monarchy on one side; or, as some read it, "it raised up one dominion"—that is, one empire—out of the joint powers of Media and Persia. It had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. Some think that these were the figure of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which Cyrus conquered; others, that they appeared as three projecting tusks, and therefore were the symbol of three despotic dynasties which governed that empire. Whatever view we take of it, the figure presents it in a formidable and ravenous aspect. It was said to it, "Arise, and devour much flesh," intimating that, notwithstanding all the conquests which had been made by this empire, there were others yet to be subdued, and much blood to be shed by it.

The third beast, which was like a leopard, denotes the Grecian monarchy, founded and extended by Alexander the Great. It answers to the belly and thighs of brass in the image. Like the leopard, this monarchy was distinguished for strength, craft, and cruelty; its four wings point out the great swiftness of its conquests, and its four heads signify the four divisions into which the kingdom of Alexander was parted, after his death, and taken possession of by his four chief captains, Seleucus Nicanor, Perdicas, Cassander, and Ptolomeus. Faber considers the four wings to be four kingdoms, and the four heads to denote four successive forms of

government :—1. The limited hereditary monarchy of Macedon ; 2. The generalship of the Greek states ; 3. The Oriental despotism of Alexander ; and, 4. The military aristocracy, which ended in the four captains assuming the kingly title. But we apprehend the former view is more in accordance with the figures. "Dominion was given to it,"—evidently intimating that it possessed great and extensive power, and also that the victories and conquests gained by this Grecian, often by means so small, showed that God in his providence, for his own holy and wise purposes, rendered his measures successful, and gave him power over the world.

The fourth beast, which Daniel saw coming up from the stormy sea, was different from all the beasts that preceded it, and it appeared fiercer, more formidable and more mischievous than any of them. It appeared so dreadful and terrible, and possessed of such uncommon strength, that there was no beast of prey to which it could be compared. This beast answers to the legs, and feet, and toes of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and must signify that empire or monarchy which succeeded the Grecian, viz., the Roman Empire. The peculiarities of this terrible monster evidently agree with the character of that empire. 1. It succeeded the Grecian monarchy, as this beast succeeded the third beast ; and it was diverse from all that preceded it, in its form, in its conquests, in its rule, in its continuance, and in its breaking up and overthrow. 2. It was dreadful and terrible to all the nations which it vanquished, and to all that opposed it. The most terrible despotism, and the most refined

cruelty, have prospered under its sway. 3. It was strong exceedingly: it had in it the strength of the iron to break in pieces and to subdue. Its strength held Europe as well as other nations long in abject bondage; and its great strength appears in its "great iron teeth," and in its devouring appetite, and in its breaking in pieces and stamping the residue with its feet, actions which not only exhibit strength, but which cast contempt and defiance upon every other power with which it contends. 4. It had ten horns. These symbolize the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided—the secular states that rose up when the imperial government fell. These are to be found in the various distinct kingdoms or governments of Europe, which once formed the Roman Empire.*

* The number of these kingdoms or principalities has not always been *ten*, there being sometimes more and sometimes fewer; but, as Sir Isaac Newton observes, they are still called the *ten kings*, from their first number. They have been variously enumerated by different writers. Faber gives the following list:—1. The Vandals; 2. The Suevi; 3. The Alans; 4. The Burgundians; 5. The Franks; 6. The Visigoths; 7. The Anglo-Saxons; 8. The Heruli Thuringi; 9. The Ostrogoths; 10. The Lombards. Sir Isaac Newton's list is as follows:—1. The Vandals and Alans, in Spain and Africa; 2. The Suevians, in Spain; 3. The Visigoths; 4. The Alans in Gallia; 5. The Burgundians; 6. The Franks; 7. The Britons; 8. The Huns; 9. The Lombards; 10. The kingdom of Ravenna. Robertson gives them as he supposed to exist in 1833:—1. Naples; 2. The Popedom; 3. Austria; 4. Switzerland; 5. Sardinia: 6. Spain; 7. France; 8. Portugal; 9. Britain; 10. Belgium. But wherever they exist, or in whatever form, these ten kingdoms, who once "gave their power and strength unto the beast, shall yet hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

5. While Daniel considered the horns, he, with some degree of astonishment, saw another little horn rising up among them, and in order to give place to it, three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots, which, as interpreted by one of the heavenly host in verse 24, means the subjugation of three of the kingdoms by this little horn. He saw also in this horn "eyes, like the eyes of a man," and "a mouth speaking great things." This horn is the symbol of a power, or of a kingdom which occupies a very prominent place in this prophecy, and is again and again referred to, both by Daniel and by the heavenly messenger who interpreted the vision. And the question naturally occurs, What is that power of which this little horn is the figure? The best answer to which will be found by attending to the position which it occupies, and to the description of it given in this prophecy. Other features in its character are afterwards particularly referred to, both by the angel and the prophet; but its peculiarities appeared to Daniel, at the very first glance, so strikingly prominent, as to convince him that it was the symbol of a power altogether different from these earthly powers prefigured by the four beasts. 1. He saw it coming up among the horns of the fourth beast *after* they had grown up. 2. It appeared at first as a *little* horn, but soon increased in great power. 3. Before it three of the other horns, or kingdoms, were uprooted. 4. It had in it the eyes of a man. 5. It had a mouth speaking great things. Looking then at the description of this little horn given by Daniel, there can be little difficulty in identifying it with the ten-horned beast which John in his vision saw rising

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out of the sea, mentioned in Rev. xiii. This power, which Daniel saw in the form of a little horn springing up among the kingdoms of the Roman Empire, appeared to John in the form of a monstrous beast, wielding the power of these kingdoms, and turning it whithersoever it pleased. In both cases we see it connected with the iron-teethed dragon of the Roman Empire—possessed of a mouth speaking great things, and opening that mouth in blasphemous words against the Most High. From its identification with John's beast of the sea, and from the description given of it throughout the whole of this chapter, it is evidently the symbol of that powerful system of ecclesiastical tyranny and oppression that rose up in connection with the civil power of the Roman Empire, and not only rivalled that power, but wielded it for its own purposes, and thus reigned over the kings of the earth. This despotic and desolating horn long existed in the Romish Church, connected with the civil power of the empire; in other words, in the Roman Catholic Establishment of Christianity; but it afterwards branched itself out in all the other civil establishments of religion, formed after its model within the empire. The very essence of this monstrous horn is the union of civil and ecclesiastical power; for unless it were united with civil power—unless it sprung up in connection with the other horns, and by its skilful management turned them into its service, it could neither look more stout than its fellows, nor speak great and blasphemous words, nor make war with the saints and prevail against them. But all these things are exactly descriptive of that Antichristian system. In its Roman Catholic form, we see

it springing up in the midst of the Roman Empire, and casting down three of its kingdoms, in order to clear the ground for the establishment of its own throne, and the sway of its terrible sceptre. We see in it "the eyes of a man," in that penetration, and skill, and sagacity with which all its measures are conducted, and in that proud and overbearing look, with which all its votaries are regarded. And surely no power on earth has a mouth speaking so great things as this Antichristian horn. It has sometimes declared the thrones of the kings of the earth vacant; it has pretended that the Roman Pontiff was God's vicegerent on earth, and that all kingdoms were given into his hand. At one time the Pope bestowed all South America and the West Indian Islands on the Crown of Spain! and at another, all the territories east of the river Indus, with the Islands in the Indian Sea, upon the Crown of Portugal! It claims power over the bodies and souls of men; it pretends to wield the keys both of heaven and hell, and no title or ascription of power is too high to be refused by it. In short, its words are so great that it attempts to clothe them with the authority of the Almighty.

VERSES 9–11.—"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn

spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

Daniel saw the little horn of Antichristian despotism and tyranny, which was to exist and to oppress Europe for hundreds of years, rooted and established in the power of the Roman Empire. He saw the proud glance of its eyes scowling upon all around it. He heard the great things which it spake; but now the scene changes; and the prophet sees thrones tumbling into ruin—a burning throne of judgment erected—a judge, clothed in divine majesty, seated upon it—the little horn and its supporters summoned to the bar—the trial proceeding which issues in their condemnation, and the sentence executed by casting them into the burning flame.

The prophetic narration of this solemn and awful scene, is no doubt a graphic description of the last judgment in which the wicked shall be doomed to everlasting burning; but this scene evidently refers to a judgment previous to that, viz., to the judgment of the little horn that is, to the judgment and overthrow of that great system of ecclesiastical despotism, which it represents, and also the overthrow of all that despotism, and tyranny, and oppression which it has infused into the governments of the earth by its connection with them. For this terrible scene, the Ancient of days is represented making solemn preparation, as if for the last judgment, of which no doubt this will be the symbol. And this preparation intimates the awful solemnity and dreadful nature of the scene—preparation which the prophet, in vision, saw in the distance, but which in the present day is drawing near, and beginning to

make its appearance in the dispensations of God's providence. The great things spoken by the little horn, and the depredations committed by him, are hastening on the judgment; and God is arising out of his place to make inquisition for blood. The first part of this scene presented to the prophet was the casting down of the thrones. As the throne is always the symbol of power, authority, and dominion, these thrones evidently refer to the power and dominion of these beasts, or kingdoms mentioned in the previous part of the vision, including, no doubt, the throne of the little horn. The casting down of the thrones means the overthrow of their power and dominion. All these powers that have supported the little horn, and that have opposed the government of Christ, must be cast down. And the present aspect of providence seems to indicate the near approach of this awful crisis. The world of late has witnessed an unprecedented and extensive shaking of thrones and dominions, both civil and ecclesiastical. The tremulous heaving of that mighty earthquake which is destined to overturn every Antichristian system, has of late been felt throughout the nations and Churches of Europe, and the aspect both of God's providence and his predictions seems to indicate that these shakings of the nations have been only the presages of more terrible convulsions which are at no great distance. In the midst of these fearful overturnings Daniel saw a throne erected which was ~~immovable~~ stable and upon which sat the God of heaven, in judgment upon these Antichristian powers. The description which is here given of this judge, is such as to point out, not any bodily shape or bodily parts, but his splendour and glory. He

is called the "Ancient of days," because he is the eternal Jehovah, whose existence was of old from everlasting, and because he is possessed of infinite wisdom, and shall in the exercise of this wisdom sit as the judge in the overthrow of these systems that oppose him. His garment was white as snow, emblematic of his glory and splendour, and of the spotless purity and justice of his administration. The hair of his head was like the pure wool, intimating the venerable and glorious appearance of the judge, and the wisdom which characterized his operations. His throne and its wheels were like the burning flame. This throne has a very formidable appearance, and presents two very striking peculiarities. 1. It is movable, set on wheels, symbolizing the swiftness of procedure in executing judgment upon his enemies, and intimating that he will ride in circuit, as in a triumphant chariot, through every country where the thrones of opposing Antichristian systems are found. "He shall wound the head over many countries." 2. Both the throne and the wheels had the appearance of devouring flames of fire. This intimates the dreadful nature of his dispensations, in the judgments which he will inflict upon his enemies, and in which they shall be utterly consumed. The fiery stream that issued and came forth from before him, is the fit emblem of his indignation against these enemies: it was the awful harbinger of his approach, and intimated their speedy destruction. On this solemn occasion thousands of thousands are the ministers of the judge, and ten thousand times ten thousand are his attendants. These are the angels of heaven—the bright spirits who stand before the throne of the Eter-

nal, and who attend him in his administration. Regarding these angelic hosts, we are here informed that they are very numerous—myriads of them stand before him; that they are ever ready to do the will of God—they stand before him ready to receive his order, and to minister unto him; that they are often employed by him in works of judgment; and their attendance before his throne on this solemn occasion naturally leads to the conclusion that they shall likely be employed in the overthrow of these Antichristian powers whose destruction is here predicted.

The whole process of the overthrow of these systems is here exhibited under the figure of a solemn trial before a court of judicature: "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." This intimates that God will proceed against the Antichristian system according to the strictest rules of justice and equity, and that the equity of his procedure shall be publicly seen and acknowledged. The opening of the books points out the minuteness and accuracy of the process, as if books had been kept, in which every action was recorded, and now opened for the rule of procedure. Then every great word of blasphemy uttered by this Antichristian horn, and every deed of oppression and blood of which it has been guilty, shall be inquired into and punished.

The trial being concluded, and judgment recorded against them, the prophet next beholds the execution of the sentence, which was of the most fearful nature. He beheld, "even till *the beast* was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." Not only is the Antichristian horn destroyed, but the very

beast upon which it grew—that despotic and tyrannical power of the Roman Empire which supported and gave power to the little horn—that must be destroyed; and the language intimates the most complete destruction: "The beast is slain,"—deprived of life and vigour. "His body is destroyed," or his power completely broken; and in order to make a full end and a total consumption, his mangled body is given to the devouring flame;—all which exactly accords with the predicted overthrow of this system in chapter xviii. of the Book of Revelation, where it appears as a rich mercantile city consumed to ashes. The reason or the cause of this awful destruction, is "because of the voice of the great words which the little horn spake." We have formerly remarked that this little horn represents that system of ecclesiastical despotism that sprung up among the kingdoms of the Roman Empire in the form of Church and State alliance, and which was for a long time embodied in the Popish or Roman Catholic establishment of religion. This system has "a mouth speaking great things;" and, as has been already noticed, no power on earth has ever spoken greater things than this. These are said, in verse 25, to be "against the Most High." How fitly does the description suit this Antichristian system! It speaks against the Word of God, and forbids it to be perused by those to whom he has sent it. It sets itself in the place of God, and usurps his prerogative and his titles. It speaks against his Church, his ordinances, and his servants; and has often, by its proud words of usurped authority, caused their blood to run like water;—in all which deeds of diabolical cruelty it has been abetted

and supported by the ten horns of the fourth beast—the civil power of the Roman Empire. Now, it is because of these great words spoken by the little horn that it is destroyed, and that the very beast upon which it grew is to be slain, and cast into the burning flame. It is because of the words and deeds of the Antichristian system, supported by the despotic power of the Roman Empire, that ruin and desolation must fall upon the Antichristian system, and also upon all the civil despotism, and tyranny, and oppression by which it is supported.

VERSES 12–14.—"As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."

The question seems here to be anticipated, what became of the other three beasts that preceded this dreadful and terrible monster, whose total destruction the prophet had witnessed? These, we are told, were also destroyed, but in a different way. "They had their dominion taken away," but they were not destroyed at once; for although disabled, "yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time." The succeeding monarchy took away the power and dominion of the one that preceded it. The Medo-

Persian destroyed the dominion of the Babylonian; the Grecian, that of the Medo-Persian; and the Roman, that of the Grecian. But their genius and spirit to a certain extent still remained; although the one supplanted the other in power, yet the tyrannical and despotic spirit was still retained throughout the monarchies in succession. That spirit, which is the very life-blood of all these monarchies, was still preserved, and is found flowing in the veins of the Roman monarchy until this last beast is slain and his body destroyed. This shows the marked difference in the destruction of the three preceding monarchies and that of the Roman Empire. The first three had their dominion wrested from them by their successors, while their life or their spirit still remained in existence; but the last is to be completely destroyed, both in its spirit and its power. Each of the former was supplanted by an earthly dominion somewhat akin to its own, but the last is to be superseded by the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In verses 13 and 14 we are told by whom this destruction of these persecuting systems is effected, and what is to be the glorious result of their overthrow. Jesus Christ, coming forth in the glory of his mediatory character, is to be the glorious conqueror, and the extension and glory of his kingdom the consequence. This part of the vision seems to have particularly attracted the attention of the prophet. While he looked he beheld one like unto the Son of man appearing on the scene. We can be at no loss in determining who this is. This is a title that is given to Christ; it is the title by which he acknowledges himself to be the

Messiah. In his reply to Caiphas (Matt. xxvi. 64), when he adjured him by the living God to tell whether he was the Christ, the Son of God, "Hereafter," says he, "shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." In which language there is no doubt a reference made to this same scene, as well as to the last judgment; and in John v. 27, we are told that "the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment. because he is the Son of Man." When Daniel saw him in vision, "he was like the Son of man; he was indeed the Son of God, and had not at that time become the Son of man; but he appeared on this occasion, as he often did under the ancient economy, in human likeness, as a gracious intimation of his assumption of our nature in the fulness of time. He came forth robed in the flowing mantle of the skies, and making the clouds his chariot. It is worthy of notice, that in almost every prediction of this terrible scene—the judgment and destruction of Antichrist—Jesus Christ is represented as coming for this purpose in the clouds of heaven. Christ himself, referring to it in that remarkable prediction recorded in Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi., says, "they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory;" and says John, in reference to this, "behold, he cometh with clouds:" and when John saw him coming forth for the destruction of the Antichristian system under the symbol of the vine of the earth, he appeared as the Son of man sitting upon a great white cloud. His coming in the clouds of heaven, is no doubt emblematical of the character of his dispensations at that eventful period.

These clouds are charged with the lightning and the thunder of God's indignation against these iniquitous Antichristian systems that are doomed to destruction. They are emblematic of that mysterious and awful sublimity which shall characterize his dispensations at that time—by the swift and terrible nature of his judgment, and of the power and irresistible force of these judgments; for "his strength is in the clouds most high." Having come forth in all this terrible majesty, he approaches the throne of the Eternal, and is introduced into his presence by the myriads of his attending angels. The Ancient of days is here represented as sitting upon his throne, ready to give sentence and to execute judgment. Christ approaches him in the character of Mediator, as his God and Father, from whom he receives authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man. In this great work of judgment, he is here represented as having not only the concurrence of the hosts of heaven, but also of the Ancient of days who sits upon the throne; and the result of all this will be the extension and glory of Christ's Church on earth: "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." That kingdom is the gift of God to Jesus Christ as Mediator. At the time of the overthrow of Antichrist, he is here represented as approaching God on his throne, in order to receive it; he had the promise of it long ago, and that promise is sure: "I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," says God to him, "and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the

river unto the ends of the earth; yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him." For a long period of time the four beasts possessed the dominion and the kingdom, but now their reign is closed, their "thrones are cast down," and the kingdom is to be given into the hand of the Messiah. This is a prophetic declaration of that dominion and authority which Christ shall exercise in the world during the period of the latter glory of his Church. The kingdom is his, and he shall then appear as the governor among the nations, for the world shall be brought into the Church: his dominion shall be extensive, for "all people, nations, and languages shall serve him." These have always been under his power and authority as the supreme Ruler of the world; but the greater part of them have either been ignorant of his government, or rebels against it. Many of them have given their homage and their allegiance to the beast, and to the little horn; but now they shall be made Christ's willing subjects, and shall serve and obey him. This shall be a glorious reign, for there was given him glory as well as dominion. These glorious things that have often been spoken of the city of the Lord in her millennial state, shall then be accomplished. "The kings of the earth shall bring their glory and their honour into it;" and "God will glorify the house of his glory." The Church of Christ, which shall then extend to the utmost parts of the habitable world, and shall encircle the whole of its inhabitants, shall then appear in glory far surpassing anything exhibited by her, in any former period of her existence in our world, for he that dwells in her will then "make the place of his feet

glorious." And this kingdom shall be stable and sure; it is a kingdom which cannot be moved. "His dominion shall be an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." These kingdoms that preceded it, although possessing the courage of the lion, the strength of the bear, the cunning of the leopard, or the terrible and devouring power of the iron, must come to an end; even that little horn, which has reigned over the kings of the earth, whose mouth boasts of sitting as a queen and seeing no sorrow, must lick the very dust, and go into perdition. But Christ's kingdom, which he shall then erect in glory on this earth, shall not be destroyed, and shall never pass away. In his reign Christ shall have no successor, nor shall any hostile invader tread within his borders. His reign shall continue while this world lasts, while sun and moon endures; and when he brings his kingdom to the glory of heaven, his reign over it shall be to all eternity.

VERSES 15–18.—"I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

We have here the effect produced upon Daniel by this vision. His spirit was grieved in the midst of

his body. Although protected by the body as the sword is by the scabbard, yet it felt grief and trouble from the visions of his head. This trouble must have arisen from the powerful influence of the vision upon his spirits, and the overwhelming effect which supernatural disclosures have upon a spirit yet dwelling in a clay tabernacle; for in our present state we cannot endure the presence of beings purely spiritual, and our spirits would fail before the unveiled glory of the heavenly world; or, perhaps, he felt so amazed and astonished at the discoveries made to him, that his mind was in a state of perplexity and confusion, not knowing the meaning of this strange vision. This perplexity of spirit was accompanied with an anxious desire to understand the meaning of the scene presented to him in vision. "He came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this." They that stood by were evidently the holy angels that attend upon Christ, and who are before the throne of God—the thousands and tens of thousands that stood before Him who sat upon the throne. To one of these glorious spirits Daniel applied for an interpretation of the vision, and the angel granted his request: "He made him to know the interpretation of the things." He informs him that the four beasts which he had seen in vision are the symbols of four kings, or monarchies; that is, as formerly noticed, the Babylonian or Chaldean, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. These beasts appeared to Daniel in vision rising out of the sea, while in a state of dreadful commotion. The sea, in prophecy, is generally the symbol of society

under error and delusion; and if in a storm, it represents society in a state of great agitation and convulsion. From such a state of society these monarchies arose. But the angel tells Daniel here, that they "arose out of the earth," intimating that they were of this world, and therefore very different in their nature and origin from that kingdom which was to succeed them—a kingdom which is to come from heaven. In the symbol they appear to Daniel as beasts coming out of the sea—an agitated and convulsed state of ignorant society. But the angel tells him what they are, and whence they are—earthly kingdoms, standing out in prominent contrast with that kingdom which is given to the Son of man, and which shall never be destroyed. Hence he informs him further, that "the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it for ever and ever." This is a short and comprehensive account of that glorious kingdom which is to succeed these four monarchies, in this world, when they are destroyed and their power and dominion broken. A more enlarged account of which we have in the close of this chapter. The saints of the Most High are the people of God who shall, in that glorious period of the Church referred to, become so numerous as to fill the whole earth: the knowledge of the Lord shall in that day fill the earth. The saints shall then possess the kingdom. Hitherto the kingdom, or the dominion of the earth, has been held by these monarchies, in which has been displayed the ravening cruelty of beasts of prey. But in that glorious period the kingdom and the dominion shall be possessed by the saints of God, and

administered according to the rule and the spirit of Christ's gospel. We have no idea that there is any intimation given here, that the people of God shall wrest the kingdom or the power out of the hand of tyrants by the sword; but that, in the overthrow of tyrannical and persecuting systems, God in his providence shall so overrule events, that civil governments shall be constituted and set up on the principles of righteousness, of equity, and of justice—in other words, according to the principles of the kingdom of Christ. The immutability and permanency of this kingdom is noticed again and again in this prophecy: the saints shall possess it "for ever, even for ever and ever." The powers and dominions of these monarchies continued for many ages, but they must come to an end. This kingdom, however, shall have no end; it shall be established upon the basis of righteousness; its laws and regulations shall be according to righteousness; both rulers and subjects shall be righteous; and permanency shall characterize its whole constitution and government. It shall continue during the long period of the millennium, in this world, and in the glory of heaven to all eternity.

VERSES 19–22.—"Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse, from all the others exceeding dreadful, whose teeth *were of* iron, and his nails *of* brass; *which* devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet: and of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with

the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

Daniel is especially concerned about the fourth beast, and requests further information regarding it; and what strikes him especially, and excites his anxiety for information, is the diversity of its form and of its deeds from all the other beasts: this he had formerly noticed in the description given of it in verse 7. The angel had informed him that these four beasts were four kings or kingdoms; but here was a kingdom different from the rest, and exhibiting in its form and in its administration some striking peculiarities. Such was the Roman Empire, of which this fourth beast was the symbol; it was diverse from the preceding empires, having first the form of a kingdom, then of a commonwealth, afterwards it was under emperors, and in process of time divided into ten kingdoms,—all of which were under the dominion of that horn whose mouth spake great things. Its aspect also was more terrible and forbidding than any of the rest: "it was exceeding dreadful." Its whole form and features showed that it possessed destructive propensities. Its teeth were of iron—its nails of brass;—by these it devoured and brake in pieces, and trod its victims under its feet; and what rendered it the more dreadful was, not merely these ten formidable horns which it had, but that other horn which came up among them, before whom three fell. Of the meaning of these ten horns Daniel wished to be informed, but especially of "that little horn that had

eyes, and a mouth speaking very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." But that which seems to have perplexed the prophet most, and regarding which he was most anxious for explanation, was the power which this little horn possessed of making war with the saints. "I beheld," says he, "and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." In this we have an additional description of the little horn to that formerly given. We have already stated that this little horn is the symbol of that great Antichristian system that has for ages existed and prevailed in Europe, in the form of established Christianity, or what is generally called Church and State connection. That system for a long period existed in the Papal kingdom, or Romish Church, but afterwards branched out into Protestant establishments. This description of the little horn given by Daniel, as has already been noticed, identifies it with the beast which John saw rising out of the sea, to whom the dragon gave power and authority. (Rev. xiii.) That beast also had a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and we are told that "it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" This broad feature in the character of this system, so perceptible both to Daniel and to John, is seen in operation only in the system of civil establishments of religion, whether Popish or Protestant. The description belongs to no other system. Making war with the saints, or, in other words, persecution for religion and for conscience' sake, is the prominent and prevailing feature in their character. It is in that

system, and in that alone, that we find all the persecution and oppressive laws that have been made against the Church of Christ, since the first establishment of Christianity. Daniel tells us, that in this war "he prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came." God in his holy and inscrutable providence allowed Antichrist for a time to prevail, and his own heritage to be wasted by this beast of prey. For 1260 years did he allow the holy city, his own Church, to be trodden under the feet of this monstrous and persecuting system. And even when its great teeth are broken in its mouth, and its brazen claws blunted—when its persecuting power is broken—it will yet open its mouth in blasphemy, and attempt to lay its mutilated paws upon the sheep of Christ's pasture. Its spirit and its *attempts* at persecution are still the same, and will continue to be so until the Ancient of days come, for judgment and destruction upon all such oppressive and persecuting systems. Then "judgment shall be given to the saints of the Most High," and judgment shall be executed upon this monstrous power. The King and Head of Zion shall then sit in judgment, and shall plead and avenge the cause of his long oppressed people. Antichrist shall then be stripped of his power to judge and to oppress, and the power of judging and executing righteous judgment shall be committed into the hand of the righteous men who shall then inhabit the world. They shall then possess the kingdom. In their hand shall be found the law of Christ's kingdon—the word of God and his gospel—by which all these oppressive systems shall be judged, and by which the kingdom now given into their hand

shall be ruled. The symbolic representation of all this being presented to Daniel, he is anxious to know and to understand its meaning; and this the angel explains to him more fully in what follows.

VERSES 23–28.—"Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak *great* words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy *it* unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto *is* the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart."

The angel now tells Daniel the meaning of the fourth beast, and of the little horn: "The fourth beast," he says, "shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth." This kingdom, we have already seen, is the Roman Empire, which, with various changes and modifications, has continued for ages. It succeeded the Chaldean, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian; and it was diverse from all of them. This diversity, as has already been noticed, appears both in its constitution

and in its administration. Daniel saw in the symbol the instruments of cruelty, oppression, and destruction; and the angel tells him, that during its reign these shall be employed with terrible and wasting effect: "It shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces." A very slight attention to the history of the Roman Empire will show how exactly and dreadfully this prediction has been fulfilled, and how accurately the character of the kingdom was drawn upon the symbol. Every historian who has recorded its deeds, tells of the power of its armies, the extent of its conquests, the vassalage of its subjects, the annihilation of the power of its vanquished foes, and the treading down and breaking in pieces of every thing that attempted to stand in its way, or to oppose it. The ten horns which Daniel saw on this beast, are ten kings, he is told by the angel, or ten kingdoms, that were to spring out of this vast empire. These, as has been stated, are the different kingdoms of Europe, into which the Roman Empire was divided; which, although there may be a slight diversity of opinion among historians regarding their identity, appear to have continued for a long period—entire in their number, and distinct in their government. This explanation of the angel points with great clearness to the Roman Empire, for in no other can these marks be traced. It is only in the great kingdom of the Roman Monarchy that we find springing up ten distinct kingdoms. The angel tells Daniel, that the little horn is another kingdom or power, that shall arise after them, diverse from them, and shall subdue three kingdoms. We have already seen that

this power rose up during the existence of the Roman Empire, in the form of the civil establishment of Christianity, and existed long in the form of the Papal kingdom; and we have also seen that this power, and no other, answers the description given of it in this prophecy. The angel draws the features of his character here a little more minutely: "He shall be diverse from the first;" that is, diverse from any of the other kingdoms. His authority is a combination of civil and ecclesiastical power, asserting a right to dispose of secular affairs, and stretching his anomalous sceptre over all the other kingdoms. This great Antichristian power is here represented springing up by stealth among the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire. To prevent suspicion or alarm, he assumes the form of the other kingdoms—he appears as another horn. But in that horn of his power he conceals the diversity of his operations, until he reach that greatness by which, ere they are aware, he exceeds them in power, and reigns over the kings of the earth. As a token of this, he subdues three of these kingdoms, and turns them into a civil kingdom for himself. These, now called the Papal States, or the States of the Church, he formed into a theatre for the exercise of his own power, and for a model government of despotism and tyranny, which he intended to impose upon all the kingdoms under his control. Daniel saw that he had a mouth formed for speaking great things; and the angel tells him that these great things which he spake were "great words against the Most High." John tells us that they were words of blasphemy. These great words evidently refer to that arrogant assumption

of power and authority by this system over the kingdoms of the world—over the consciences of men, and even over the prerogative of Heaven. What other system on the face of this earth ever uttered so great or so blasphemous words against the Most High, as this system of civico-ecclesiastical tyranny? Has it not issued its commands and injunctions to the kings and governments of the earth? Has it not pretended to dissolve the authority of princes, and loose their subjects from allegiance to their thrones? Has it not opened its mouth wide in blasphemy against the Word of God, and forbidden the perusal of the statutes of Heaven? Has it not assumed the power and the prerogative of the Almighty in its pretensions to forgive sins, and to wield the keys of heaven and hell? It would be vain to attempt an enumeration of all its great words and blasphemies. They would fill volumes, but let these suffice as a specimen, and a specimen which clearly identifies the system referred to with this kingdom of the little horn. But the angel tells the prophet further, that "he shall wear out the saints of the Most High." This may refer either to their patience or to their number. Often has the patience of God's people been almost worn out by the cruel and relentless persecutions of Antichrist; and had it not been for the intercession of their great and glorious Advocate, both their faith and their patience would have failed; and often, by persecution, have they been reduced in number until they appeared as a few hunted sheep scattered upon the mountains. The design of Antichrist was to wear them out altogether, and at the time of the death of the witnesses he

thought his design was accomplished; but the Saviour had his chosen remnant sealed and secured; and thus prevented his Church from being annihilated. He shall "think to change times and laws;" this seems to refer to these human inventions which he has attempted, and sometimes with fatal success, to introduce into the Church and into earthly kingdoms, and which tend to subvert and supersede the laws and ordinances of God. All these superstitious ceremonies that have been introduced into the Church, instead of the instituted ordinances of God, and all these saints' days, and feasts, and festivals, which constitute the mummery of the system, are the exact counterpart of this feature of his character. We are here forcibly reminded of the unhallowed and God-daring attempt made in France about half a century ago, under the auspices of this system, to change the day of the Christian Sabbath from one day in every seven, or from every first day of the week, to every tenth day of our time; an attempt which was overruled and set at n ought by the providence of God, and the constitution of man.

But the angel tells the prophet, that for a certain time God will allow such tyranny and usurpation to prevail: "They shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time." In the mysterious providence of God, this Man of Sin, this Mystery of Iniquity, shall be permitted to rule, and to trample upon the Church for a time. The saints as well as the apparatus of government shall be given into his hand; and the time during which he is to exercise his despotic power, and cruel and oppressive tyranny, is here specified—"A time and times and the dividing

of time;" that is, *three years and a half*, "a time" denoting a year. This is the same time which is given in the Book of Revelation as the period of the beast's continuance, and the time of the depressed and persecuted state of the Church. It is there called "forty and two months," and "one thousand two hundred and sixty days," which are just the months and the days contained in three years and a half. This is another point which identifies this horn with the beast in Rev. xiii. These days, however, are prophetic, each of them denoting a year. This we shall illustrate more fully afterward. We only remark further on this at present, that to restrict the time of its continuance, or making war with the saints, to 1260 literal days, or three and a half literal years, would be altogether inconsistent with the description, the nature, or operation of this system. There has never yet arisen among the ten kingdoms of the Roman Empire any system that has reigned over the kings of the earth, or that has persecuted and oppressed the Church of Christ only three and a half literal years. The magnitude of this persecuting system, the wide range of its dominion, and the number and extent of its desolating operations, clearly show that it requires far more than three and a half literal years to spring up, to increase, and to push its power and dominion to such extensive boundaries, or to carry on these wars with the saints that for centuries deluged Europe with blood. Three *prophetic* years and a half, or 1260 years, is a period far more in accordance with the time of this monster's continuance, during which the saints have been given into his hand. But this time, long as it is, must come

to a close; for "the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion." At the end of this period—the time and times and a half, or the 1260 years—a judgment seat shall be erected, upon which the Ancient of days shall sit, and judgment shall be passed upon this horn, and his dominion, his reigning power, shall be broken and taken away. This judgment, and this taking away of his dominion, began at the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. xi.) and the pouring out of the first vial. Then it was that the witnesses of Christ, who had been slain by this Antichristian power, rose from their state of death and desolation; and ever since that important period the dominion and persecuting power of Antichrist have been broken, although not totally consumed. That power and dominion shall be completely overthrown and consumed under the pouring out of the seven vials (Rev. xvi.) exactly as here predicted: "They shall take away his dominion, *to consume and destroy it unto the end.*" First, his dominion—his reigning and persecuting power shall be broken, and then by a series of striking dispensations in God's providence, which shall be continued in wasting him until the end of his existence. The breaking up of his dominion, or of that absolute authority which he exercised over the kingdoms of the world, and the limiting of his persecuting power, by which he so profusely shed the blood of the saints, took place at the end of "the time and times and dividing of time." But it requires the time that elapses between the taking away of his dominion, and the end of his existence, to consume and destroy it. On this point we find a remarkable coincidence between the prediction

here and that of John in the Book of Revelation. It seems to be an idea among many commentators, that the period of "a time and times and a half," or of 1260 days, is the time of Antichrist's existence, and that when that period draws to a close the Antichristian system will be swept from our world. This view, we think, is not supported by the language of the prophecy either in Daniel or in the Revelation. In the predictions of John, we are expressly told that the slaying of the witnesses (Rev. xi.) closes the period of 1260 days. But after the resurrection of the witnesses, and the great voices in heaven proclaiming the extension of the kingdom of Christ, and the permanency of his reign, there is a period of Antichrist's existence, in which the seven vials of God's wrath are to be poured out upon him, until he is totally consumed on the field of Armageddon. ~~There~~ This is exactly the view presented to us here in this prediction by the angel, at the close of the "time and times and the dividing of time"—the same 1260 prophetic days. His dominion is to be taken away—he is to have no longer absolute authority over the nations, or power to raise a general persecution against the Church of Christ; but he is not wholly destroyed—"His dominion is taken away *to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*" The taking away of his dominion, or the overthrow of his reigning power, which took place upwards of 150 years ago, was only the first step to his final overthrow—the commencement of a series of dispensations and events that have been for these many years exposing and wasting that iniquitous system, and working on to its final overthrow, "consuming and destroying it to the

end." At the time of the "taking away of his dominion," or the breaking down of his reigning and persecuting power, there were great voices heard in heaven, in the visible Church of God, saying, "The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." The proclamation went forth in the gospel, that it must now be sent to all nations, and that they must be brought into Christ's kingdom, and this work of evangelizing the nations has been going on ever since; and the angel tells us here, that at "the end," when the power and existence of Antichrist shall be totally consumed, this prediction regarding the extension of Christ's kingdom shall be accomplished. "The kingdom and dominion," says he, "and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." This describes the glorious period that shall succeed the overthrow of the Antichristian system, and of all systems that have been under its dominion, or have been actuated by its spirit, and refers to the millennial glory of the Church of Christ in this world in the latter day. There is a particularity in the language, which shows not only the glory of the scene, but the complete change which shall be effected both in the Church and in the world. Formerly, and for a long period, the little horn and its dependent powers of the world, possessed the kingdom and the dominion; but now Christ is to take the kingdom, and to give it to the people of the saints of the Most High. These very people, who were long crushed, and broken, and persecuted by this little horn, and by the iron teeth and

brazen hoofs of its vassals, are now to possess the kingdom, and to hold it of Christ their King and Head: the people of God shall then be its rulers as well as its subjects, for they shall have "the dominion," as well as the kingdom--they shall have the victory over the beast and its little horn. The laws and regulations of the kingdom shall be according to righteousness, and administered and obeyed in the spirit of Christ's word and his gospel. And this kingdom shall then be great and extensive—the greatness of it under the whole heaven shall be theirs; and in this respect it shall far excel the greatness of any of the kingdoms that preceded it. Their dominion was extensive. The little horn itself ruled over a considerable portion of the world; but the kingdom of Christ, which the saints shall possess in the millennium, shall include the whole world. Wherever there are inhabitants on the earth, under the vast and extensive expanse of heaven, there shall Christ's kingdom be, and there shall his saints possess it. "All dominions," or rulers, "shall serve and obey him;" the kings of the earth and the rulers shall no more be found combining against him, or attempting to break his bands asunder, but they shall be his saints and his willing subjects. Then shall the prediction be accomplished, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." (Ps. lxxii. 10, 11.) And to crown the whole, this kingdom shall be everlasting: "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom:" he shall be succeeded by no other; his government shall have no end; he will con-

tinue his kingdom in this world while it lasts, and in the glory of heaven for ever and ever.

Daniel tells us, in the last verse, that this was the end of the matter. It was the close of the prophetic scene. And this vision, in its predictions, reaches to the end of time—to the close of the millennial period on earth, and even to the eternal reign of Christ and his Church in heaven. It intimates also, that Daniel was to expect no further revelation of this matter in the present vision, but must rest contented with the explanation which the angel had given him. But he tells us also, that the extraordinary revelations given him in the vision made a deep and affecting impression upon him, both in mind and body. "As for me Daniel," says he, "my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me." As one under great alarm, his countenance turned pale. It was a matter of great trouble to him to foresee the calamities that were to befall the world, and especially the Church of God; to foresee the governments of the earth, like beasts of prey, treading down and breaking in pieces, and devouring its inhabitants; and to behold Antichrist, with great words and proud look, proclaiming war against the saints of God, and training and leading on these beasts of prey to run down and to scatter the sheep of Christ's pasture. But he "kept the matter in his heart," that he might meditate and think on it, and thus be able to give an account of the vision and the interpretation of it, for the benefit of succeeding ages.

The important predictions in this chapter suggest

to us the following practical observations:—1. Tyrannical earthly governments, although, in the providence of God, they are allowed to oppress the inhabitants of the world, are under the control of Heaven, and are fulfilling the purposes of Infinite Wisdom. 2. When ecclesiastical systems are allowed to stand up among earthly kingdoms, in connection with them, it leads to pernicious consequences. They open their mouth with great and blasphemous words, and their look is more stout than their fellows. 3. God as the supreme Judge, who administers his government in righteousness, will assuredly, in his own time, overturn every power and every system that is opposed to his kingdom in this world. 4. The presence of God is devouring fire to his enemies. 5. The angels of glory are God's attendants, and his ministering servants in his dispensations in his Church. 6. The blasphemies and persecutions of ecclesiastical tyranny, in connection with earthly governments, are the provoking cause of God's judgments on such systems. 7. God may sometimes endure long with his enemies, in the exercise of his patience and long-suffering. 8. The dispensations of God's providence may sometimes be very dark and perplexing to the people of God. 9. The most perplexing aspect of God's dispensations should not prevent us from inquiring into the meaning of them. 10. The kingdom of Christ shall yet appear far more extensive and glorious than ever it has yet done. 11. The Antichristian system exceeds all others in proud despotism and oppression. 12. Although God, for holy and wise purposes, has given his Church into the hand of Antichrist, yet he has a

time set for her deliverance, and for the final overthrow of that tyrannical and persecuting system. 13. The disclosure of God's future dispensations toward his Church and towards the world is calculated to make a deep and solemn impression upon the mind of his saints. How mysterious are the ways of God! His wonders are without number, and he doth great things past finding out. How marvellous his procedure, in allowing such a system of iniquity to rise up and prosper, and not only reign over earthly governments, but trample under foot the Church of Christ, for hundreds of years! But how glorious and decisive will be the victory of our Redeemer over that system and its allies when, after allowing it centuries to increase and establish its power, he shall in a very short period consume it with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming!

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSES 1–2.—"In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, *even unto* me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first. And I saw in a vision; (and it came to pass, when I saw, that I *was* at Shushan *in* the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam;) and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai."

THIS chapter brings us to another division of the prophecies of Daniel. In the preceding division we have a comprehensive prediction of the overturning of earthly kingdoms, and the extension and glory of the kingdom of Messiah in the world to the end of time. The four great monarchies were seen by Daniel in his dream succeeding each other, and then succeeded by the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which is to continue without a successor, and to encircle within its boundaries all the kingdoms of this world. This, therefore, comprehends the whole scheme of prophecy. But, in accordance with God's plan of prophetic revelation, there is given to the prophet, in what follows, a more enlarged and extended view of some parts of the prophecy. In revealing his future dispensations to his Church, God very often gives the

prophet first a short and comprehensive view of the whole scene of the prediction, and then the same prediction on a more enlarged and minute scale. (See Hosea, the Book of Revelation, and also this Book.) Daniel had first a view of the four great earthly monarchies as they succeeded each other; now he has a view of them in their mode of succession, and the variety of its circumstances :—First the kingdom of Messiah was exhibited to him as a glorious and permanent kingdom, that was to succeed the earthly monarchies; now he is to see it in a great variety of its aspects and operations, working its way into the world, and extending itself to the ends of the earth. As formerly noticed, the preceding chapter closes that part of the book which is written in the Chaldean language: from the beginning of this chapter to the end of the book it is written in Hebrew, no doubt, chiefly for the benefit of the Jews, that they might know what was to befall the Church in the latter days. In the prophetic account which is here given of the fate of the earthly monarchies, we have little or no notice taken of the Chaldean, very likely because at this time it was near its termination, and that revelation in the handwriting upon the wall concerning its destruction was to be given to the prophet immediately before its overthrow, as all that was necessary to be foretold of its final ruin. We have here—1. The manner in which this prediction was revealed to Daniel: it was in vision. The former prediction was revealed to him in a dream, but this in a vision while he was awake—perhaps intimating the greater clearness and particularity of

the prediction. God had various methods of revealing his mind to his prophets, and this is one which he often adopted, by presenting certain figures before either the eye of the mind or of the body. 2. The date of the vision: it was "in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar;" that is, two years after the former vision. And Daniel seems careful to distinguish between this and the former vision, or dream, in the preceding chapter. "It appeared unto me," says he, "after that which appeared unto me at the first." Although relating to the same things, it was a distinct vision, two years having intervened between them. It was previous to the overthrow of the Chaldean monarchy, and the taking of Babylon by Cyrus. Some historians think that this was the last year of Belshazzar's reign, and if so, this vision was seen immediately before the destruction of Babylon; but others, with greater probability, assert that he reigned seventeen years, and therefore this vision was seen by Daniel fourteen years before the overthrow of Babylon. 3. The place where Daniel was favoured with this vision: it was by the bank of the river Ulai, in the province of Elam, when he was at Shushan the palace. According to the best historians, the province of Elam belonged anciently to the Persians, and the city Shushan was its capital. In it there appears to have been the palace of their kings, to which was given the name of the city. This province, according to the prediction of Jeremiah (xlix. 34, &c.), was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and annexed to the kingdom of Babylon. But we find that after Babylon was subjugated by the prince of Persia, the city Shushan became

the capital of the empire, and the palace in Shushan was the royal residence of their kings. This was the spot where Daniel was favoured with the vision. Some think that Daniel was at Babylon at the time of the vision, but was transported in spirit to Elam just as Ezekiel had his vision at Jerusalem, although he was at the time personally in Babylon. But others are of opinion that Daniel was personally in the province of Elam, at Shushan the palace, and on the banks of Ulai, when he had the vision, and that he had been there at this time about the king's business. It matters very little to the exposition of the passage which view we adopt. The certainty of Daniel seeing the vision is the same in either. The vision seems to have been given to Daniel in this place, because it contained a prophecy regarding that kingdom of which Shushan was the capital.

VERSES 3–8.—"Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns: and the *two* horns *were* high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west, on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground; and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram,

and brake his two horns; and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Therefore the he-goat waxed very great: and, when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones, towards the four winds of heaven."

In this vision Daniel had a symbolic view of the united kingdoms of Media and Persia, overthrown by the kingdom of Grecia, together with the results of the conflict. A condensed view of this prediction we had in verses 5 and 6 of the preceding chapter, under the figure of the beasts like the bear and the leopard. Here we have it in its more extended form, under the figure of a ram and a he-goat, in their terrible conflict, and its consequences. In the vision, Daniel lifted up his eyes, and beheld, by the bank of the river, a ram which had two horns, of great height, the progress of whose growth appeared to have been visible to the prophet, for the one that came up last appeared to reach a greater height than the other. This ram, as Gabriel tells Daniel, in another part of this chapter, was the symbol of the united kingdom of Media and Persia, the two horns representing their two kings— the higher that of the Persians. Horns are the emblem of power and authority, and these, growing upon the head of one ram, were the symbol of both kingdoms united under one government. Historians tell us that the ram was the royal ensign of the Persians, and that rams' heads with horns, the one higher and the other lower, are still to be seen in the ruins of Persepolis.

Daniel saw the ram pushing in three different directions—westward, and northward, and southward; intimating the great power of the kingdom, and the different directions in which they pushed their conquests. The strength of this kingdom, as described in the symbol, was so great that no other could stand before him, and when it conquered its opponents, none could deliver them; and so great did it become, that the will of its monarch was uncontrolled: "He did according to his will, and became great"—a graphic description of the purest despotism. While Daniel was considering this striking emblem of despotic power, he beheld an he-goat coming from the west, which Gabriel interprets, in verse 21, to be the king or empire of Grecia. The goat, according to Justin, was the symbolic arms of Macedon, from a very ancient date. He is seen by the prophet, in vision, coming from the west—from that direction in which lay the country of Greece or Macedon. "He went upon the face of the whole earth," denoting his uninterrupted and extensive success, carrying all before him as he went along. "He touched not the ground," intimating the rapidity of his conquests. For the same reason, he is represented, in the preceding prophecy, as having "four wings of a fowl." It is affirmed by historians, that Alexander the Great, symbolized by the notable horn, which appeared to Daniel between the eyes of the he-goat, in eight years conquered all the vast countries that lay between the Egean Sea and the river Hypanis in India, thus making himself master of what was then understood to form the world. The emblem under which this mighty conqueror is repre-

sented—"a notable horn"—points out his great power and remarkable character; and the position of the horn, between the eyes of the goat, intimates the wisdom, and prudence, and foresight which guided all his operations. Daniel saw this powerful animal coming against the ram, and running upon him in the fury of his power. Coming close upon him, with undaunted courage, while he was moved with choler against him, he smote the ram, and brake his two horns, and cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him—pointing out the invincible power with which Alexander, the king of Grecia, came against Media and Persia, and the complete overthrow of that empire by the arms of Greece. The Medo-Persian empire at one time possessed great power, and was victorious over every nation that opposed it, but it had no power to stand against the armies of Grecia. Before this mighty conqueror it fell, and was trodden down as the mire of the streets, and no other power could deliver it out of his hand. Historians tell us that this prophecy of Daniel was shown to Alexander the Great at Jerusalem, by Jaddus, the Jewish high priest, and by this he was greatly encouraged to proceed in his expedition against the Persians. This he-goat—the Grecian power under Alexander—waxed very great, and as he proceeded in his conquests, his power increased; but how short-lived is the glory of this world, and how uncertain and fleeting is human greatness! Just at the very time when his power was at its height, "the great horn was broken," and was succeeded by four notable ones, that came up and looked toward the four winds of heaven. This was

exactly fulfilled in the death of that mighty conqueror, and in the partition of his empire into four kingdoms. Having subdued extensive and powerful kingdoms, this great warrior returned to Babylon, which he entered with a splendour and magnificence altogether unprecedented, "dreaded and respected," as Rollin tells us, "not as a conqueror, but as a god." But in the midst of his triumph and his conquests, forming new schemes for gratifying his ambition and his cruelty, and flushed with the surest hopes of success, he died the inglorious and shameful death of the drunkard. His death was the effect of an intemperate debauch, while he was scarcely thirty-three years of age. How easy is it with God to pour contempt upon ambitious, cruel, and bloody princes, and to turn the sins and debaucheries of the wicked into the instruments of their own destruction! By the righteous overruling providence of God, the lust of intemperance, which has slain its tens of thousands, laid the honour and ambition of this mighty conqueror in the dust, and scattered the glory of his conquests to the four winds of heaven. Nor did the consequences of the iniquities of this man of blood die with him. Having trained his generals in the school of ambition and conquest, and taught them to breathe nothing but cruelty, and war, and desolation, and having died before he had leisure to settle the affairs of his kingdom, these very men, who were indebted to him for all the honour, and power, and riches which they possessed, turned their weapons against the family of their benefactor, and having sacrificed them to their ambition, divided his empire among themselves, into the four following kingdoms:—1. Ptolemy

had Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Cœlo Syria, and Palestine. 2. Cassander had Macedonia and Greece. 3. Lysimachus obtained Thrace, Bithynia, with some provinces on the other side of the Hellespont and the Bosphorus. 4. And Seleucus had Syria, and all that part of Asia Major which extended to the other side of the Euphrates, and as far as the river Indus. These were the four notable horns which came up toward the four winds of heaven, after the great horn was broken, and whose history is little else than a record of war, and blood, and desolation. These Grecian conquests, however, were overruled by the wonderful providence of God, for paving the way for the dissemination of the gospel in the fulness of time. By these conquests of Alexander, the nations were not only united together in Grecian literature, but became acquainted with Grecian philosophy, which trained them up in the habit of thinking, and awakened in them the idea of the immortality of the soul, and thus facilitated the preaching of the apostles, and rendered it more uniform.

VERSES 9–12.—"And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant *land*. And it waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given *him* against the daily *sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered."

From the description given here, both of the rise

and character of this little horn, it is generally understood to be the symbol of Antiochus Epiphanes, the younger brother of Seleucus Philopater, who succeeded his father Antiochus in the kingdom of Syria and Asia. The manner in which he usurped the kingdom, by supplanting Demetrius, his elder brother's son, will fall under our notice afterwards. While he reigned in Syria, he not only increased his power, but practised the most horrid cruelties on his subjects, especially on the Jews in and about Jerusalem. Hence he is so prominently exhibited, both in prophecy and in history, and branded as the vilest usurper. So infamous did he become as an oppressor and persecutor of God's people, that the Spirit of God, in his predictions, has marked him out as the type of the most blasphemous and persecuting system that has ever appeared in our world—the Man of Sin, or the Antichristian system. Although in many things there is a striking similarity between this little horn and the little horn referred to in chapter vii., which arose among the ten horns of the fourth beast—the ten kingdoms of the Roman empire —yet we must view them as perfectly distinct. The little horn mentioned in the preceding chapter belonged to the fourth beast, the one mentioned here belonged to the third. The former was the direct figure of the Antichristian system, the latter was the symbol of that king which was a type of Antichrist. In the one we have the description of Antichrist as he rose up, and prevailed, and persecuted the nations of the Roman empire; in the other, we have the description of that wicked monarch who was the type of that persecuting system.

He is here described as having "waxed exceeding great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." This marks the direction in which he carried his conquests—to the east and south of Syria, and into the land of Palestine, that pleasant land which God took from the heathen, and gave to his people Israel. But it "waxed great even to the host of heaven," to the people of the Lord in the Jewish Church, who, as his hosts, attended upon him in his temple. Some of these he cast down. Even the stars, the ministers of God in his temple, he cast to the ground, and stamped upon them. This is a description of that relentless cruelty and persecution which this usurper inflicted upon the Jews, the history of which, in all its horrible details, is to be found in the writings of the historians of that period. Rollin informs us (vol. viii., book xviii.) that, "having taken Jerusalem by storm, and during the three days that it was abandoned to the fury of his soldiers, he caused fourscore thousand men to be inhumanly butchered. Forty thousand were also taken prisoners, and the like number sold to the neighbouring nations." Not only was he guilty of cruelty, and murder, and bloodshed among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but he profaned and robbed the temple of the Lord; "yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host," which may refer either to his conduct toward the high priest, whom he deprived of his office, and set up in his room an ungodly wretch, who set up in the place of God's worship the rites of heathenism; or perhaps it rather refers to Jesus Christ himself, who is the true high priest over God's house. He cast down or profaned

the place of his sanctuary, throwing open its sacred inclosures to heathen intruders, and caused the daily sacrifice, which was offered for the whole congregation of Israel morning and evening, to be discontinued—thus profaning both the temple and the altar. An host was given him also against the daily sacrifice, which is understood to have been fulfilled in that citadel which he erected in the city of David, in which he placed a garrison of soldiers, in order to disturb those who might come to worship in the temple. This was given him "because of transgression"—because of Israel's sins God righteously permitted this. Truth, or God's word and his worship, was allowed to be cast to the ground, and for a time he practised in this manner and prospered.

Such is the prophetic view which Daniel had in vision of this destructive and persecuting power which arose out of the Asiatic division of the Grecian Empire, and to which the angel, in his explanation of the vision, refers in the close of this chapter; but the description given of him here, and also in chapter xi., agrees so exactly with the nature and genius of the Antichristian system, that this persecuting power is generally and fitly understood to be a type or symbol of Antichrist. The prediction here, no doubt, had its fulfilment in the reign of Antiochus, and his persecution of the Jews, but under this there is a prediction regarding that great persecuting Antichristian system under the New Testament dispensation. This is evident from the following considerations:—1. This little horn bears a striking resemblance, in its origin and operations, to the little horn mentioned in the preced-

ing chapter, which is evidently a direct symbol of Antichrist. 2. In chapter xi. he is represented as placing in God's sanctuary the abomination that maketh desolate; and we find, in accordance with this, and as the type of Antichrist, the Saviour, in his prophecy, in Matt. xxiv., refers to the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel, as something that was yet future, although it was, to some extent, fulfilled previous to Christ's prediction, evidently showing that Antiochus, in his desolating abomination, was a true type of that New Testament Antichristian system that was to lay the sanctuary of God so long desolate. But we shall see as we proceed how exact their resemblance is, and how truly the one prefigured the other. In this prophetic description of the power of Antiochus we see some of the features of Antichrist standing out with considerable prominence. 1. In its waxing great from a small beginning. 2. In its casting down to the ground the people and servants of God—a graphic description of the persecutions of the Antichristian system. 3. In its magnifying itself against the prince of the host, do we not see the figure of Antichrist setting himself against Christ, and exalting himself above all that is called God or worshipped? 4. In his abolition of the daily sacrifice, and casting down the truth, do we not see Antichrist banishing the Word and the purity of his worship from his Church, and even superseding the sacrifice of Christ? Particular attention to this point is requisite, because the right understanding of this typical character forms a key to some subsequent parts of the prophecy.

VERSES 13, 14.—"Then I heard one saint speaking, and another said unto that certain *saint* which spake, How long *shall be* the vision *concerning* the daily *sacrifice*, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

While Daniel was contemplating the vision, and before he sought for an explanation of it, his attention was arrested by a conversation between two of the heavenly host, regarding this vision; and, doubtless, the prophet being anxious to learn its meaning would listen with close and earnest attention. He heard one saint speaking, and another asked a question at a certain being that spake. The word, literally rendered, is, "a holy one;" but whether a glorified saint or an angel we are not informed. It may have been either. We are assured that angels take a deep interest in the concerns of the Church on earth; and why may not glorified saints, who, in many things, are made like unto angels? But some suppose, from the peculiarity of the expression, that the person to whom the question was put was no other than the uncreated angel of the covenant, Jesus Christ himself, who is Israel's holy one. "Another saint said unto that certain," or unto that "such an one," or a secret one—designations fitly applied to Christ, and if so, the question was fitly put: it was put to one who was fully able to answer it—nay, who alone could answer it, previous to its being revealed to man. The question put to him was regarding the length of time during which this enemy was to tread down the city and people of God, abolish

his worship, and profane his house. "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice," &c.? How long shall God's house be given into the hand of this fierce enemy, and his worship and ordinances be allowed to be profaned? The answer is directed to Daniel, for it was for his sake, and the sake of the Church, that the vision was given. "He said unto me, Unto 2300 days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The literal computation of this period, allowing 360 days for a year, is six years and nearly four months; which, according to historians, was nearly the literal time of the desolation or desecration of God's temple by Antiochus, in consequence of transgression, computing the time from Antiochus' first invasion of Judea, and his pillaging the sanctuary, to the time when it was cleansed from his abominations, and the Jews relieved from his persecutions. This was, doubtless, the first fulfilment of the prediction. But as this persecution, and tyranny, and cruelty of Antiochus, as was formerly noticed, was a type or symbol of a greater desolation, which Antichrist should make in the Church of God, during a long period, under the New Testament dispensation, we must understand these 2300 days, according to the genius of the best interpreters, to mean 2300 prophetic days, or 2300 literal years, which marks the time when the Church, God's sanctuary, shall be cleansed from Antichristian abominations—from all that which Christ tells us "stands in the place where it ought not." The proof of prophetic days standing for literal years we defer until we come to the consideration of the next chapter. Assuming its truth at present, we

only remark farther, that these 2300 prophetic days, or literal years, form a very important period in the predictions regarding the Church of God, and her desolations under the cruelty and tyranny of Antichrist. And did we know exactly when this period commenced, we would be at no great loss in ascertaining when the Church would be delivered from Antichristian oppression and abomination. But, in attempting to ascertain this correctly, we meet with very considerable difficulties. Indeed, it is very questionable whether this can be accurately calculated until the prediction is accomplished. Without dogmatizing on this subject, however, we submit the following very plausible, but not original, calculations to the judgment of the reader. There is in chapter ix. a prophetic number, which is supposed to be connected with the number 2300 days mentioned in this chapter, and to form a part of it. There we are told that 70 weeks are determined upon the people of the Jews, and upon the Holy City, "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins," &c. This understood as a prophetic number, being seven days in a week, and each day standing for a year, makes 490 years. Now, if both these periods began at the same time, or, in other words, if the 490 years in chapter ix. form a portion of the 2300 years in this chapter, then it follows that 490 years of the 2300 were elapsed at the time when transgression was finished, and reconciliation made for iniquity, &c., leaving the remainder of the 2300 years as the time to run until the sanctuary is cleansed. Thus:—

	Years
The whole period until the cleansing of the sanctuary,	2300
70 weeks, or 490 years, until the death of Christ,	490
	1810
Add 33 years of Christ's life, - - - - - -	33
The date of the cleansing of the sanctuary, -	1843

Again—

Take the whole period, - - - - - - -	2300
Messiah is said to be cut off at the end of 7 weeks and 62 weeks = 69 weeks, - - - - - - -	483
	1817
Add 33 years as the life of Christ,	33
The date of cleansing the sanctuary,	1850

That is, according to these calculations, taking the 2300 days to be prophetic, or literal years, and the 490 or 483 prophetic days or literal years in chapter ix. to be a part of the 2300 in this chapter, then 1843 or 1850 years from the birth of Christ the sanctuary shall be cleansed. But some may reply, that this period has now elapsed, and yet we see not the sanctuary cleansed. The abomination of Antichristian desolation still occupies the holy place, and stands where it ought not. Must we not then reject this calculation? Before doing so, however, we ought to weigh calmly and seriously the following considerations:—1. At this distance of time we can by no means be certain as to the accuracy of dates. Some chronological calculators affirm that the date of our year, from what is generally called the birth of Christ, is *several years* wrong, and if so, our calculation of these periods must be wrong to the same extent. 2. We cannot be altogether certain

whether the phrase, "*After* threescore and two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off," means exactly at the end of the threescore and two weeks, or perhaps some time after; and, 3. The event predicted is often not fully accomplished at the very time when it is said to happen, but its fulfilment is only commenced. When the seventh trumpet sounded (Rev. xi.), it is said there were great voices heard in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ," while it is plain that this was only the proclamation of the commencement of the event: ere that could be accomplished the seven vials of God's wrath had to be poured out on the Antichristian system, and all that *after* the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The case may be similar here. After 2300 years the sanctuary shall be cleansed, but the process of cleansing may only commence at the end of that period. "*Then* shall the sanctuary be cleansed," says he who spoke to Daniel; not referring to the termination of the process of cleansing, but to its commencement. The process shall then begin, which may require years to bring it to a termination. Now, if the principle of the above calculation is right, although its dates may be several years wrong, it is evident we are not far from the commencement of the cleansing of the sanctuary, if it is not already begun. From what, we ask, has the sanctuary to be cleansed? From what defilement and abominations has the Church of God to be purified? Is it not from these Antichristian desolating abominations, typified by these heathen abominations, introduced into God's temple at Jerusalem by the bloody and blasphemous king of Syria, Antiochus? The

Church of Christ is to be cleansed, he tells us, from that abomination of desolation, spoken of by the prophet Daniel—that abomination which had yet to appear in the New Testament Church, although long ago spoken of by Daniel—that abomination which stands where it ought not, sitting in the place of God, and exalting itself above all that is called God and worshipped—that Antichristian power, both civil and ecclesiastical, which has usurped the place of Christ in his Church, and which has produced desolation and ruin wherever it has prevailed. It is from this, in all its departments, that the sanctuary must be cleansed. And dare we say that this eventful process is not already begun?

What means that loud cry that has of late years been raised against Antichristian interference in the Church of Christ throughout the nations of Europe? What means that ominous struggle of the host of truth and liberty, even under the foot of Antichristian despotism? What mean these increasing and gigantic heavings of its dreaded power, which have shaken nations and made the thrones of princes totter to their bases, indicating the near approach of more terrible convulsions? What means that alarm that has seized even upon Antichrist's *standard-bearer*, that has made him start from his throne, and trample in his fury upon his victims—which has caused him to attempt the extension of his fading power—to wave his dark and dismal flag of error and delusion over the very turrets and bulwarks of Zion, and in frantic desperation to prepare to summon "the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to the battle of the great day of God Almighty?"

What means all this, if it is not the indication of the cleansing of God's sanctuary being just at hand, if not already begun? The whole aspect of God's providence at present, and also of his predictions, gives loud and pointed warning that a fearful crisis is approaching, but which will ultimately issue in the cleansing of his sanctuary.

VERSES 15–27.—"And it came to pass, when I, *even* I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man; for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision. Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground, but he touched me, and set me upright. And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end *shall be.* The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia: and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up

against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is* true; wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it *shall be* for many days. And I Daniel fainted, and was sick *certain* days: afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood *it*."

In this part of the chapter we have an account of Daniel seeking to know the meaning of the vision, and of his request being granted. He had seen the vision, and he now sought earnestly, and likely by prayer, for its meaning. In answer to his request, there was seen standing before him one having the appearance of a man, who, from his appearance and his authoritative command to Gabriel, appears to have been the Son of God. The likeness of humanity in which he appeared at this time was that in which he often manifested himself previous to his appearance in human nature. He spoke to the prophet even with man's voice, while he stood upon the river Ulai—between its banks. He called to the angel Gabriel, who appeared to have been one of his attendants at this time, and ordered him to show the meaning of the vision to Daniel. This is the same angel that appeared, long after, to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, in the temple at Jerusalem. Having received his commission, he came near to where the prophet stood. But at his presence Daniel got alarmed, and fell down upon his face under the overwhelming splendour of his glory. The title, "Son of man," by which Gabriel addressed Daniel, is one which we find given to none of the prophets but to Ezekiel and him. They had more

frequent intercourse with angels than any of the rest; and perhaps they were thus addressed to remind them of their humanity, and to prevent them from being too much exalted through the abundance of the revelations given to them; or perhaps it was a mark of honour conferred upon them—this being one of Christ's titles, and they being his servants, were highly honoured by having this title given to them. Gabriel bids him "understand," or perhaps intimates, rather, that he will let him into the understanding of the vision. He intimates to him, that "at the time of the end shall be the vision;" that is, at the time of the end of the indignation here predicted,—the end of God's indignation against persecuting systems. At the end of the scheme of providence which would bring the 2300 years to an end, at that time the vision shall be accomplished, and shall be made plain so as to be fully understood.

While the angel was speaking with Daniel, we are told he was in a deep sleep on his face toward the ground. This was doubtless owing to the weakness of human nature under the weight of these revelations, or under the overwhelming glory of the angel's presence. In kind compassion, the angel touched him, not only to awake him, but to strengthen him; and like the touch of Christ to John in the isle of Patmos, it raised him up and set him upright. And he bids him take courage, for he would let him understand what was to happen in the last end of the indignation. This refers to the end of the time already mentioned—the period when God in his indignation, at the end of the 2300 years, should arise against Antichrist and sweep him

out of his sanctuary. That is to be a time of indignation and of great wrath on the part of Antichrist, but also of God's indignation against him; or, as Christ tells us in Matt. xxiv. and Luke xxi., a time of "tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." And the angel informs Daniel, that this time was appointed by God; that the prediction will certainly come to pass at the appointed time; and that, though a time of fearful indignation, it must and will have an end.

Gabriel now tells Daniel the meaning of the vision, and what shall be in the last end of the indignation. As the angel's interpretation has been to some extent anticipated in our exposition of the vision, there is the less necessity of reverting to it again, except in so far as new features of character present themselves. The ram with two horns, he tells us, signifies the united kingdom of Media and Persia—two kings or kingdoms in one monarchy; and the rough goat which came against the ram, was the symbol of the Grecian Empire; and the great horn between his eyes was the first king, or Alexander the Great, who was first monarch of that empire. The breaking of that horn, and four standing up in its stead, means the death of Alexander, and the partition of his empire into four kingdoms by his generals; but, although of the same nation with him, they possessed neither his power nor the extent of his dominion. In the latter time of their kingdom, when they were about to be supplanted by the Roman power—when Greece, the chief province of the empire, was subdued by the Romans, as a manifest token of the decline of the third monarchy, and when the trans-

gressors among the Jews, had arrived at the full measure of their iniquity, by casting aside the true religion and embracing idolatry—when, by their iniquity, God was provoked to visit them with judgments, "a king of fierce countenance shall stand up." This king, as already noticed, who was symbolized by the little horn, was Antiochus Epiphanes, who was the type of Antichrist. He arose toward the latter end of the Grecian monarchy. The fierceness of his countenance indicated those wild and ungovernable passions that were let loose in the craft, and policy, and cruelty which characterized his reign. He had "understanding in dark sentences," which intimates his skill in dark and deceitful practices—a fit type of Antichrist. And some historians very justly remark that the title Epimenes, madman, would have been far more suitable for him than Epiphanes, illustrious. He was to be mighty in power, but not in his own. The reference here seems to be to his usurped authority, having seized on the power of the kingdom, while by right it belonged to another. He was to be a wonderful destroyer: destruction and murder were prominent features in his character. In his devastations he was permitted to practise and prosper for a time, even to the fearful destruction of the holy people, God's ancient Israel. He is represented also as crafty and polite, while he is proud in heart; and by his cunning, in pretending friendship and peace, he was the destroyer of many. So proud, and insolent, and daring was he, that he stood up and set himself against the Prince of princes, the King and Head of Zion—against his people and his house at Jerusalem. But he was to be broken

without hand; which was fulfilled in God striking him with awful judgments, and carrying him off, not with the sword or the hand of man, but with a loathsome disease, attended with fearful torments of body and awful horror of mind. Now, in all these features of the character of Antiochus, we see clearly depicted the character of Antichrist. His craft and cunning, his usurped power and proud and destructive policy, his dreadful cruelty and daring impiety, and his dreadful end by no hand but that of God,—all foreshadow the character, the conduct, and the end of the Antichristian system—a system of cunning and cruelty, of daring opposition to the Prince of princes, but which shall be destroyed by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, smiting upon it and crushing it to powder, which shall be scattered to the winds of heaven. Gabriel farther informs Daniel of the certainty of the vision. "The vision of the evening and of the morning which was told, is true;" that is, the vision recorded in verses 13 and 14, concerning the 2300 "evenings and mornings," as the word "days" signifies. That was a true statement regarding the ruin of Antichrist, and the time when he shall be destroyed. But Daniel is commanded to "shut up the vision, for it shall be for many days;" that is, many days shall pass over ere it be fulfilled, therefore it must be shut up at present. In prophetic language, shutting and opening, or sealing and unsealing, means just concealing and revealing—delaying the accomplishment of a prophecy or bringing it into effect. And when Daniel is commanded to shut up the vision at present, it means, that notwithstanding the angel's interpretation of the general

meaning of the vision, yet the full sense of it, and the exact time of its fulfilment, were not to be fully understood until the time of its accomplishment. Hence it would appear, from the concluding statement, that even Daniel himself did not fully understand it in all its bearings. He was astonished at it, "but none understood it." It was thus to be shut up until the opening of the sealed book by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and its whole contents will be fully developed at the end of the days, when Antichrist shall be consumed, and the Church of Christ enlarged and glorified. Under the weight of the glory of the vision, Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days—so incapable is man in his present state to bear the glory of heaven, or to converse with heaven's inhabitants. Having in the kindness of God's providence again recovered, he rose up and did the king's business. He was at this time, as formerly noticed, in the service of the king of Babylon, Belshazzar, and was faithful in the discharge of his duty, and in the trust reposed in him.

The following practical remarks are suggested from this chapter:—1. God, in great condescension, and in various ways, is pleased to reveal his will to his servants: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." 2. The genius of some of the powers of this world, is often fitly characterized by the fierceness and fury of wild beasts. 3. Earthly powers in their rise and fall are under the superintendence of God's overruling providence. 4. Although the persecutors of God's people may for a time prosper and prevail, there is a set time in the purposes of God for their utter de-

struction. 5. The angels of heaven take a deep interest in the affairs of the Church on earth. 6. God has a set time for the deliverance of his Church from Antichristian oppression and pollution, and for her extension and glory. 7. It is the duty of God's servants to search into the revealed will of God, and endeavour to understand it. 8. The angels of heaven are Christ's servants, and are often by him sent forth to minister to his servants and people. 9. The Antichristian system, although incorporated with the kingdoms of this world, and often gives them their fashion and mould, is in many respects different from them, and has many prominent features by which it can be distinguished. 10. In our present state, even at best, we are incapable of bearing much of heaven's glory: Daniel, the servant of God, and highly favoured, fainted in the presence of a heavenly messenger, while the revelations of God's purposes were unveiled to him. 11. While we are in this world, its lawful business must not be neglected: we must be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 1, 2.—"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the [illegible]lations of Jerusalem."

This chapter contains Daniel's prayer for Israel's deliverance from Babylonish captivity, and God's gracious answer to it; in which is contained one of the most remarkable predictions of the Messiah that we have in all the Old Testament, and in which is exhibited that great deliverance of the people of God, by Jesus Christ, of which the deliverance of Israel from Babylon was but the shadow. Regarding the date of this prayer and of this prediction Daniel is very particular—it was "in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus." As formerly noticed, Darius was uncle to Cyrus, who took Babylon and overthrew the Chaldean monarchy. Cyrus, having regulated the affairs of Babylon, set Darius over the realm of the Chaldeans, over which he reigned about two years. By some historians he is called Cyaxares. It was in the first year of his reign, and consequently some short

time after the overthrow of Babylon, that Daniel set himself to inquire into the number of the years of the Babylonish captivity. Cyrus had not yet issued his decree for the release of the Jews; but the time was drawing nigh for their deliverance; and Daniel, having searched the writings of Jeremiah, contained in the different books of his prophecies, found that Jerusalem was to be seventy years desolate, and that the Jews were to remain during that period in captivity in Babylon. But at the close of that period God would bring them back to Jerusalem and to their own land. The prediction referred to is to be found in several parts of the Prophecies of Jeremiah, but especially in chapter xxv. 12, and xxix. 10–14. Daniel having consulted these, and compared them with the time he had been in Babylon, found that the time was at hand for Israel's deliverance; and, like a genuine saint of God, who felt a deep interest in his Church, he set himself to pray.

VERSES 3–6.—"And I set my face unto the Lord GOD, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: and I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments: neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land."

Daniel, although an eminent prophet of the Lord,

learned instruction from the writings of another prophet; and, although an eminent statesman, found time, and reckoned it no disparagement, to consult these writings, and to peruse the Word of God; and in doing so he found profit and advantage. The subject of his inquiry afforded him matter for deep meditation and prayer. He set his face unto the Lord, to seek by prayer the deliverance of his people, according to the predictions found in the books of Jeremiah.

In this prayer of Daniel's there are a few general characteristics worthy of notice. 1. The season of it: it was when the seventy years were about to expire—when the time of Israel's deliverance, predicted by God, was at hand. Some might be ready to say, If God had promised deliverance to Israel, and had set the time for its accomplishment, and if that time was at hand, why pray for it? would not God have brought it to pass independently of the prayers of Daniel? True, the purpose of God shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure—his promise cannot fail; but it is as true that God is graciously pleased to fulfil his promises by means, and prayer is one of these, appointed by himself: "For these things will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do it for them." Hence we generally find, that when God is about to work deliverance for his Church, or to bestow upon her some rich and important blessing, he pours out upon her the spirit of grace and of supplication, and stirs her up to ask it by prayer; and it is often a hopeful sign of the near fulfilment of God's promise when his people are earnest and importunate for it at the throne of grace. On this principle we see the close, and inti-

mate, and necessary connection between Daniel's prayer for Israel's deliverance, and God, in that deliverance, fulfilling his promise. The nearness of the fulfilment of God's promise should excite us to greater fervency in prayer for its accomplishment, and the promise itself should form the substance of our petitions. The best prayers, and those most likely to meet with a gracious reception in heaven, are just God's promises turned into petitions at his throne of grace. 2. The object of his prayer—Jerusalem's deliverance. She had been long in bondage, and his heart melted with grief over her desolations—a sure token that he was one of the sons of Zion; and his fervent supplication for her enlargement and prosperity showed that mercy was yet in store for her, and that she had a powerful pleader at the throne of grace. 3. The intensity and importunity of his supplication: "He set his face unto the Lord God," with resolution and determination not to turn away without an answer; and he employed every warrantable form of petition at the Court of Heaven. He sought, "by prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." Fasting is a duty which involves in it humiliation and mourning on account of sin, and sackcloth and ashes are tokens of the deepest sorrow. No specific time is assigned to it in the Word of God. We find it sometimes occupying a day, sometimes a part of a day, and at other times several days together, during which, for the mortification of the body, the common necessaries and comforts of life were in a great measure dispensed with. We have no account how long Daniel's fast continued at this time; but, when joined with his

supplication, it marked its fervency and importunity. 4. In this prayer Daniel made confession of sin. This is always an element in the prayer of faith, and Daniel, while he "prayed unto the Lord his God," also made his confession. He confessed his own sins, and the sins of his people Israel; and it is worthy of notice that Daniel, in his confession, employs the very language prescribed in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, to be used by the Jews in the land of their captivity. "We have sinned," says he, "and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly." 5. In this prayer there is a beautiful example of *increasing* earnestness and fervency. Faith and fervency seem to increase in strength and in earnestness as he proceeds, and the longer he continues at the throne of grace, and the more he pleads, he seems to become the more earnest and the more determined not to depart without an answer. Language can scarcely be conceived to express more fervency and earnestness with God, or which exhibits the soul clinging to the throne of grace with more fervid tenacity, than that in the close of this prayer. Here we see the soul of this man of prayer with the hand of faith casting aside every rag of its own righteousness, wrapping itself in the mercy of Heaven, and in holy fervour throwing itself into the arms of Divine Grace: "We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God."

But, more particularly, we have in this prayer—

1. His address to God. When he prayed, and made

his confession, he said, "O Lord, the great and dreadful God," &c. He is a God that is to be feared, and to be had in reverence of all that approach unto him in prayer, and he is terrible in his judgments against his enemies. He keeps covenant and mercy to them that love him and keep his commandments. He is mindful of his promise, according to his covenant, and the promise and the mercy of the covenant he bestows upon those who fear him, and give evidence of this by their new obedience. 2. His confession of the sin of the house of Israel in its aggravations; and these aggravations appear in that fearful climax of iniquity of which they were guilty. They had *sinned*, they had even committed *iniquity;* and in the commission of iniquity, they had *done very wickedly*, acting the part of the wicked and the ungodly. But they had also, in their sin, *rebelled* against God, by departing from his precepts and his judgments, thus filling up the cup of their iniquity; "for rebellion is as the sin witchcraft, and stubbornness as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam. xv. 23.) And when God sent his servants the prophets, speaking in his name, to all classes of the land, to their kings, their princes, their fathers, and to all the people, in the language of reproof, remonstrance, and warning, they hearkened not to his voice, but refused to listen. God gave them fair warning, but they would not hear, but provoked him, by their obstinate rebellion, to execute upon them the judgments which he had threatened.

VERSES 7–14.—"O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men

of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice."

In the midst of this confession of sin, the prophet acknowledges the righteousness of God in all these judgments which he had inflicted upon them. Righteousness is God's character, and it shines forth in all his operations, whether in mercy or in judgment —"Just and right is he." There is also in this confession of the prophet, the self-abasement of true penitence—"confusion of faces"—deeply felt by all classes of Israel, throughout all the countries in which they had been scattered by the judgments of God, be-

cause of their trespass which they had committed against him. Thus it is that a true sense of sin, in its deformity and aggravations, uniformly leads to self-abhorrence in the sight of God; and so deeply affected was the prophet with their aggravated iniquity, committed by all ranks, high and low, that he repeats his feeling of shame on account of it: "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face," &c.; but he ascribes mercies and forgivenesses to the Lord their God. He is the God of mercy, as well as of righteousness, and with him there is abundance of forgiveness—forgiveness to vast multitudes of sinners, and forgiveness of countless transgressions—and with him there is mercy and forgiveness even to the rebellious. He takes encouragement from this, "although they had rebelled against him." He repeats his confession of their disobedience against the voice of the Lord, set before them by his servants the prophets, commanding them to walk in his laws. He also refers a second time to the universality of their transgression of God's law—"All Israel have transgressed" it—and so obstinate were they, that they departed that they might not obey his voice. They are here represented as having kept as far off from God and his law as they possibly could, in order that they might not be found obeying it. So obstinate and perverse does the mind of the sinner become, under repeated acts of iniquity.

Having confessed their iniquities, he acknowledges the justice and righteousness of God in afflicting them for their transgressions: "Therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses." Daniel seems to refer here to Lev.

xxvi. and Deut. xxviii., and some of the chapters that follow, where God threatens his ancient people with various judgments if they disobeyed his commandments, and takes heaven and earth to witness that, if they rebelled, he would certainly bring them to pass, and the sword and captivity were involved in the threatening. The prophet acknowledges that their being scattered among the heathen was the execution of these judgments, according God's threatening and his oath. By bringing upon them this great evil, he had confirmed the words that he had long ago spoken against them. God is as faithful to his threatening as he is to his promise, and no distance of time causes him to forget it; and as their iniquities were aggravated, so God's judgments were severe. Israel rebelled in the enjoyment of peculiar mercies and privileges, and therefore their rebellion was visited with signal and unprecedented judgments. There was nothing like the overthrow of Jerusalem under the whole heaven. Daniel takes particular notice of the judgment being brought upon them exactly as it was threatened in the law of Moses, already referred to, in order to vindicate the righteousness of God, and in order to show that they had sadly neglected their duty, even under the judgment. Had they remembered the law of Moses as they ought to have done, they would have seen the reason of all their sufferings, which would have been the means of turning them again unto the Lord; but they had neglected to peruse that law, and therefore remained under the affliction. "Yet," says Daniel, "made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities," &c. They had remained careless,

and had not sought unto God by prayer and supplication, and they had neither sought after the truth of God's word, so as to understand it, nor turned from their iniquities. Their sins had so hardened their hearts, that the very judgments of God could not arouse them to a sense of their duty. Daniel acknowledges that it was on this account that their punishment was continued: "Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us." This language is spoken in condescension to our weakness. God is here represented, after the manner of men, as watching upon the evil that was inflicted upon his rebellious people. He watched over it, to see that it was executed according to the sentence or the threatening. He watched over it, to see what effect it was producing, and to continue it until the desired effect was produced—until they sought after God by prayer, and turned from their iniquities. He watched over it, as a refiner of silver over his furnace, to temper the heat of the furnace according to the hardness and obstinacy of the metal, and to prevent it from consuming or destroying the silver: "For," says the prophet, "the Lord our God is righteous in all his works," even in these works of judgment which he has brought upon them, for they had been disobedient.

VERSES 15–19.—"And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy

holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary *that is* desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

In these verses we have the supplicatory part of Daniel's prayer for Israel's deliverance, and he begins by a reference to God manifesting his great power in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. That was accomplished with a mighty hand—a striking and visible display of divine power, by which he got renown, as in the overthrow of Babylon. Literally, he made himself a name, in allusion to a mighty conqueror, who from his victories gains himself great fame and renown. But there is in this reference to God's deliverance of his people from Egypt, implied a strong and fervent petition, enforced by a variety of considerations. The prophet pleads with God that he would remember what he had done for his people in Egypt, and for the glory of his name on that occasion, and that he would now in like manner deliver his people from Babylon, and again manifest the glory of his name. He was Israel's covenant God when he brought them out of Egypt, and he is so still. He brought them forth out of that land with strong hand

and a stretched out arm, and surely his arm was not now shortened that it could not save. He had gotten himself renown by his mighty works in Egypt and at the Red Sea, and surely he would not suffer the glory of his name to be eclipsed by allowing his people to remain in Babylon. They were indeed sinful and unworthy, but so they were in Egypt, and yet he in mercy delivered them; and shall not the glory of his mercy still appear in their deliverance from Babylon? Such is the force of the prophet's plea by his reference to Egypt; and now, with earnest importunity, he pleads with God that, according to all his righteousness, he would turn away his anger and his fury from his own city, Jerusalem, and from his holy mountain. Against Jerusalem and Mount Zion the Lord had manifested the tokens of his anger in the desolations he had brought upon them, and in sending his people into captivity; and this was on account of their iniquities. They had become a reproach to the heathen, and in this God himself was dishonoured. But he pleads that God would appear in their deliverance, for the glory and honour of his name, and for the display of his righteousness in maintaining his own cause. He entreats God to hear his prayer as the petition of his own servant, and cause his face to shine upon his sanctuary at Jerusalem, which had long been desolate; that is, that he would not only look upon their afflictions, but manifest the tokens of his favour: for in his favour, or in the light of his countenance, there is salvation. And he pleads all this, not for any merit on their part, or for any thing to be done by them in future, but "for the

Lord's sake"—for the sake of the Messiah promised. It is through him that all our prayers should be presented at God's throne, and it is for his sake that God hears and answers them.

In the concluding part of this supplication Daniel becomes more fervent and pathetic, as if resolved not to leave the presence of God without an answer. "O my God," says he, "incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations." The language is figurative, and employed in allusion to our turning the ear and the eye to that upon which we fix our attention; and when applied to God, it intimates the gracious reception which he gives to our prayers, and the favourable aspect in which he views our case. He pleads that God would listen to his prayer and give it a favourable reception, and that he would but cast his eyes over the desolations of Jerusalem, and he was sure that the melancholy and ruinous spectacle would move his bowels of mercy and compassion, especially when it was the house that was called by his name, and where his name and his glory had long had their residence. And this supplication was not presented, or an answer requested, on the ground of their own righteousness, for they had none to plead at God's throne, but for the sake of God's great mercies. The grace of God was to be richly exhibited in their deliverance; and because God's mercies were great, he pled that Israel might partake of them. And he concludes with a cluster of short and pathetic petitions, in each of which he addresses the God of his mercies, and he insists with him that he would not only hear his prayer, but begin the work

of their deliverance, according to his mercy and according to his promise. "O Lord, hear"—shut not out our prayer from thee, nor turn a deaf ear to it. "O Lord, forgive"—our iniquities are many and aggravated, but thy mercies are great, therefore blot them out. "O Lord, hearken and do"—not only hear our prayer, but give countenance to it, and fulfil our desires. "Defer not, for thine own sake, O my God." He pleads now that God would not delay, but answer him speedily for his own sake; and from the consideration that he was *his God*, a God in covenant, whose promise and whose mercy never fail; and that he would not delay his answer, because of the low state of his own city, and of the people that were called by his name. The seventy years of their captivity, according to his own prediction by the mouth of his prophet, were now nearly expired, and Daniel pleads that his own promise may be speedily accomplished.

VERSES 20–23.—"And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show *thee;* for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."

Earnest and fervent prayers often meet with speedy

answers, a remarkable instance of which we have in the case of Daniel's prayer at this time. God's answer was sent to him while he was yet speaking, and praying, and confessing sin—either in the midst of his supplications, or immediately at the close of it. And as the answer came speedily, so it brought far more wrapt up in it than even the prophet anticipated. Besides Israel's temporal deliverance from Babylon, there was involved in it a prediction of a far greater deliverance than that for which Daniel was pleading, and of which their deliverance from Babylon was but the type, viz., the great salvation which Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, wrought out for all his people. The prophet carefully notices the time and the circumstance in which he received from God this answer to his prayer. As a rich display of God's grace, and an encouragement to prayer, he tells us that it was while he was speaking, and he repeats it in verse 21: according to God's gracious promise, in Isa. lxv. 24, respecting the glorious period of his Church in her latter glory—"Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." And it was "about the time of the evening oblation," which was doubtless one of the types of Christ's atoning sacrifice. There was at this time, and during the captivity, no such oblation offered, but it is evident that the *time* of it was kept in remembrance by the pious Jews, by offering their prayers about that time. The morning and evening oblation, which was offered in the name of the whole congregation of Israel, at the third and ninth hours of the day, answering to our nine in the morning and three in the afternoon, were two of the

most solemn seasons of prayer. But upon their solemn days of fasting and humiliation they continued their devotional exercises from the time of the morning sacrifice till that of the evening was finished. It seems to have been one of these seasons in which Daniel was engaged in prayer and supplication. At this time he tells us that the angel Gabriel was sent to him with an answer to his prayer. The name of this angel signifies the strong one of God. Daniel calls him the *man* Gabriel, very likely because he appeared to him in human form. He knew him as the angel that appeared to him in the former vision, recorded in the preceding chapter. He is the same who appeared to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and on both occasions he was sent with a message concerning Christ. If Michael is a name given to Christ, which we shall afterwards consider, Gabriel is the only created angel whose name is given in the Word of God. He came at this time with God's message to Daniel, with great rapidity; and it would appear he had orders to fly swifter than at other times. He came and touched Daniel, in order to turn his attention to the message he was about to deliver; and, having secured his attention, he informed him of his mission, and talked familiarly with him, telling him that he had come forth to give him skill and understanding—to make new revelations to him concerning matters of importance. He informs him that he had received the commandment to come forth for this purpose, at the time of the beginning of Daniel's supplications, and that he had come according to that injunction—a striking instance of the amazing speed

of angels. If we calculate the third heavens, where God displays his glory, and whence he sends forth his angels, to be beyond any part of creation visible to us, and consider the inconceivable distance, the speed of angels must be swifter than the lightning; or, as the poet says—

"The speed of ~~God's~~ (of angels') time counts not."

The angel Gabriel received the commandment to fly swiftly at the beginning of Daniel's supplications, and reached our world, where the prophet was, ere he had concluded! And he came to show Daniel what should hereafter befall the city and temple of Jerusalem, in behalf of which he had poured out his prayer, and to show him what God was to do for his Church in after ages. He informs Daniel also that he was an object of God's special favour, greatly beloved, or, as the word signifies, a man of great desires—a man who sends strong desires to heaven in the form of supplication, which God is graciously pleased to fulfil, and therefore the angel bids him listen attentively to the vision and understand its meaning. The angel seems to refer to the vision mentioned in the preceding chapter concerning the time of the sanctuary being trodden under foot, which, as already noticed, appears to be connected with this matter which the angel was now to reveal to him. It contained in it truths of vast importance. Christ, in referring to this prophecy, in his remarkable prediction of Jerusalem's destruction, and future events in his Church, says concerning it—"Let him that readeth understand." It is worthy of notice here, that as there is a strong resemblance between some of the

prophecies of Daniel and of John, so there is also a striking resemblance in the character of these prophets. Daniel is here called a man greatly beloved, and John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. Christ sends his angel to reveal secrets to Daniel which were hid from others; and to John, leaning on his bosom, he tells a secret which, for the time, the other disciples knew not. In all this, however, we see the rich display of God's sovereign grace. Neither Daniel's character nor his prayer *merited* God's commendation of him or his speedy answer, for the commandment came forth to show him the matter at the *beginning* of his supplication, ere ever his prayer had been made.

VERSES 24–27.—"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

In these verses we have Gabriel's message to Daniel, which was sent to him by God in answer to his supplication. He prayed for Israel's deliverance from their captivity in Babylon, and God gives him notice of a far more glorious deliverance by the Messiah. This is allowed to be one of the noblest and most interesting prophecies in the Old Testament, and is one of the strongest proofs against the Jews, in favour of Christianity, inasmuch as it determines the very time when Christ was to appear in our world, and finish the work of our redemption. Seventy years had been accomplished in Israel's captivity, and the prophet found that this period was on the point of terminating, and prayed for its speedy fulfilment. He is now shown that seventy weeks were determined to be accomplished between their deliverance from Babylon and the days of Messiah, when he was to complete his work of deliverance to his Church. "Seventy weeks," says Gabriel, "are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city." The people and the city were the Jews and Jerusalem. The time here specified was the time fixed for that people and their holy city remaining in the possession of their Jewish privileges, until the finishing of Messiah's work, and the way being prepared for the overspreading of desolating abominations. And these seventy weeks must be understood in the common prophetic style, a day for a year—that is, 70 weeks of 7 days each make 490 prophetic days, or 490 literal years. Unless we understand these 70 weeks according to this prophetic calculation, the language has no meaning, for no such events as these recorded here happened at the end of 70 literal weeks from the

period here specified. It was not at the end of 70 literal weeks from that time that the Messiah finished his work, but at the end of 70 prophetic weeks, or of 490 literal years; for we find, according to the most accurate calculations, it was just about 490 years from the end of the Babylonish captivity to the days of the Messiah. This fact fixes a principle in the interpretation of prophecy, regarding dates that are given, and days, or months, or years that are sometimes mentioned. It is according to this principle that we have understood the 2300 days mentioned in chapter viii. 14. It is according to this principle that the "times and time and the dividing of time" must be understood in chapter vii. 25, and the days mentioned in the close of chapter xii. And the same principle seems applicable to the numbers of time given in the Book of Revelation—viz., 42 months, 1260 days, &c., each day being understood to stand for a literal year.* These

* Some modern critics, who entertain the idea that all prophetic time must be understood literally, and finding the task rather hard to mould the 70 weeks of this prophecy into 70 literal weeks, or scarcely one year and a half, have endeavoured to get over the difficulty by a most unwarrantable process. They dare not assert that the time here specified is limited to 70 literal weeks, for the historical facts of the case are against them—there being at least 490 years between the date of this prophecy and the days of the Messiah; but they say that the term "seventy weeks" is a mistranslation! and that the Hebrew term "*shabuim*," here rendered *weeks*, should be rendered "*sevens*;" that is, say they, "seventy sevens of years!" A more arbitrary and unfounded translation cannot well be conceived; for the Hebrew word *shabuim*, employed by Daniel, and here rendered *weeks*, is the very same word which, in every other place in the Old Testament where it is found, is rendered

seventy weeks, then, are to be understood as seventy weeks of years—that is, 70 times 7, or 490 years;

weeks, the only difference being in the gender. Daniel uses the masculine form of the ~~name~~ noun, which in most other places of the Old Testament is found in the feminine, "*shabuoth*." Now every Hebrew scholar who is at all acquainted with the inflection of a Hebrew noun, must know that "*shabuim*" and "shabuoth" are the same noun, the difference being merely in the gender, the one masculine plural, and the other feminine. In support of this we might refer to the eminent names of Buxtorf and Opitius in former times, and also to Gesenius, the highest authority in Hebrew literature in the present day. By these eminent lexicographers it is expressly declared that "shabuim" and "shabuoth" are both plurals of the same noun, *shabua*, and have precisely the same signification, and by these authorities the term is translated "*weeks*." It is not easy to conceive upon what principle the term "*shabuoth*," in its feminine form, should, in every other part of Scripture, signify *weeks*, while in Daniel, in its masculine form, "*shabuim*," it should signify merely "*sevens*." Doubtless it involves in it the idea of *seven*, but it is *a seven* of a specific kind—viz., the *seven days* which compose the week—the *hebdomas* of the Greeks, and the *septimana* of the Latins. The term which signifies the mere number *seven* is a different noun from this, as marked in all the lexicons—viz., *sheba*. In corroboration of this view of the meaning of the word, we might refer to verses 1 and 2 of the next chapter, where the term "*shabuim*" evidently means *weeks*. Daniel says "he was mourning three full weeks," or, as Gesenius renders it, "three weeks long;" and Daniel adds the term *days* to it, literally, *three weeks of days*," intimating that they were literal weeks, in distinction from the 70 weeks mentioned here by the angel, which were 70 prophetic weeks, or *weeks of years*. It is evident, therefore, from the highest authorities and from the plainest rules of criticism, that the 490 years that were to intervene previous to the days of Messiah were exhibited to Daniel under the symbolic form of *weeks*, each day of which is prophetic, and stands for a year,

which is the time here specified, and which brings the history of Israel down to the days of the Messiah. As has already been noticed, Daniel, having consulted the prophecies of Jeremiah, and found that the 70 years of Israel's captivity were drawing to a close, was praying for their deliverance, and was now favoured with a gracious answer to his supplication, not only with a promise of Israel's deliverance at this time, but with the prospect of a more glorious and extensive deliverance by the Messiah. And 70 weeks of years were to be accomplished upon his people, and upon the holy city, ere that salvation was wrought out. What, then, is to be accomplished at the termination of these 70 weeks, or 490 years? In answer to this we have the particular account which the angel gives respecting the work of Messiah; and he mentions six distinct departments or aspects of that work.

1. "To finish the transgression." The Jews expected a Messiah, who was to deliver them from the power of their enemies, and from political slavery; but they are here informed that his great work was to "finish the transgression." To remove that great barrier that separated between God and man, and to finish it, sacrifices had now been offered for hundreds of years, and sufficient trial made to remove that barrier, but all had been found ineffectual: "Sacrifice and offering would not do." But now there was to be a sacrifice offered, that was to finish it, and to finish it

which completely overthrows the theory of literal interpretation, and fixes the principle of symbolic interpretation prophetic numbers.

so effectually that no farther sacrifice would ever be found necessary.

2. "To make an end of sins,"—to abolish sin so as to atone for its guilt, and to prevent it from rising up in condemnation against the person justified; and also to make an end of all sin-offerings.

3. "To make reconciliation for iniquity,"—by offering a sacrifice to God's justice, which had been offended by the sin of man, so as to satisfy its claims, and thus reconcile sinners to God—to repair the breach that sin had made between God and man. Messiah was to be the days-man between God and the sinner, to lay his hand upon both parties, and bring them together by making reconciliation. We are brought near to God by the blood of his cross.

4. "To bring in everlasting righteousness." This must signify something more than the principles of righteousness and equity promulgated in our world as the effect of Christ's glorious undertaking. In consequence of his mediation, "truth springs from earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven." But there is evidently a reference here to the surety righteousness of the Redeemer, on the ground of which sinners are justified, for it is called "everlasting righteousness," an appellation which can be applied only to the righteousness of him who is divine. That righteousness was wrought out by the Saviour, in his obedience to the law, and satisfaction to divine justice in our stead—in his obedience to the death; and it is everlasting, as it had its origin in the eternal counsels of God, and in its blessed consequences continues through eternity. This everlasting righteousness was *to be*

brought in—brought into our world in Christ working it out there, and brought in by the offer made of it in the gospel both to Jews and Gentiles. "Behold, I bring near my righteousness," says he, in the gospel offer. What a rich stream of grace and mercy is seen pouring into our guilty ruined world, in the *bringing in* of this everlasting righteousness! Messiah came for our salvation, and finding that we were altogether disqualified for entering into any stipulation for salvation, and that we were so poor, and miserable, and wretched that no man could pay a price either for his own or for his brother's redemption, in matchless grace he brings the very basis of our salvation with him. He brings in everlasting righteousness! He saw us without a foundation upon which to stand before God, sinking down to eternal perdition, and he brings in this righteousness as a sure foundation laid in Zion, and says, "Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." He saw the righteousness of man polluted and torn into filthy rags by iniquity, not a shred of which could shelter him from the storm of divine wrath, and he brings in an everlasting righteousness, and adorns him with this garment of salvation.

5. "To seal up the vision and the prophecy." The Messiah, when he came, was to fulfil all the prophecies and visions of preceding ages, by making the event answer the prediction: "Thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness." He was to confirm their authenticity, as the setting of a seal confirms the authenticity of a writing. All the visions and predictions concerning himself or his work in our world were fulfilled in him.

6. "And to anoint the Most Holy." The term "anoint" seems to allude to the name Messiah, which in Hebrew signifies anointed; and as the term "Most Holy," connected with the idea of being anointed, is applicable only to Messiah, this seems to refer to his being anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure, when he was consecrated by God to the exercise of his offices as prophet, priest, and king in his Church. With these offices Christ was invested as Mediator from all eternity, and executed them in all the work of our salvation, and to these he was anointed when God gave him the Spirit without measure, an intimation of which was made at his baptism, when the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, and when the voice came from the excellent glory, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Having shown Daniel what was to happen at the end of the 70 weeks, or 490 years, Gabriel next informs him when these weeks were to begin, and he tells him that he must notice this and understand it. This period, which was determined previous to the days of Messiah, was to begin at "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." This is generally understood to refer to the commandment of Cyrus, which he issued for the restoration of the Jews and the building of Jerusalem, which commandment was afterwards renewed and enforced by a decree of Darius Nothus. This order of the Persian monarch was the result of God's commandment, which came forth when the angel was caused to fly swiftly with the news to Daniel. From that date was to be a period of seven weeks and threescore and two weeks; that

is, 69 weeks (for, the point which, in some copies of the Bible, is in the middle of this sentence should be placed at the end of it), unto the Messiah the Prince; that is, unto the appearance of the Messiah—the King of his Church, the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Prince of Peace in his public character. The angel also informs Daniel, that although the commandment was given to build Jerusalem, it should be built again in troublous times. And the division of the period here given in the first seven weeks, or 49 years, seems to be these troublous times, when the enemies of the Jews annoyed them, and for years prevented them from going on with the work of repairing Jerusalem; until, under the blessing of God, and the perseverance of his servants, the work was completed under the direction of Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and Joshua.

The angel informs Daniel farther, that "after these threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off;" that is, threescore and two weeks which followed the seven weeks. During the first seven weeks, or 49 years, the city of Jerusalem was to be built, and the Jews restored to their privileges. And after 62 weeks more, or 434 years, the Messiah was to make his appearance publicly, and some time during the last week of the 70, was to be cut off. He was to be cut off or put to death by a judicial sentence, as the word signifies, "but not for himself." It was the just suffering for the unjust: in submitting to death he was a substitute, and stood in the room and stead of the guilty. He laid down his life for the sheep. This prophetic declaration regarding the exact time of the Saviour's death, must leave the Jews without excuse, and show the obstinate folly

of their unbelief. There is no discrepancy, as some might be ready to suppose, between the statement in the 24th verse, and that in the 25th and 26th verses. In the 24th verse we are told that 70 *weeks* are determined to finish transgression, &c., while in the following verses we are informed that after 69 *weeks* Messiah was to be cut off. But this only means that all these things required 70 weeks for their accomplishment, and for their taking effect upon the people of the Jews, but that *after* 69 weeks, or during the last week of the 70, the Messiah was to accomplish the great work of our redemption by his obedience unto the death. After which, and after giving the Jews due time to repent and receive his gospel, Daniel is here informed, that the city and the sanctuary were to be destroyed by a people that were to come against it, led by a powerful prince. These people were the Romans, and the prince was either Vespasian the Roman Emperor, or Titus his son, who led the army against Jerusalem and destroyed it, according to this prediction, some years after the 490 years had elapsed. In this prophecy Daniel is informed of the prosperous restoration of the Jews from their captivity, but he is also informed of a period not far distant when they were to be scattered, and their city and temple destroyed—all which happened on account of their sin in rejecting the Messiah and his gospel. And this destruction was to be very sweeping and terrible—"the end thereof shall be with a flood;" and although the war might be protracted by the obstinacy of the Jews, it would end in desolation. And that desolation was determined by the God of infinite wisdom. The angel farther informs Daniel, that Mes-

siah would "confirm the covenant with many for one week." This one week seems to be the last one of the seventy. During this week, or *after* the 69 weeks, he was to lay down his life; and by doing so he confirmed the covenant, viz., that covenant of redemption or of grace, whose condition he had undertaken to fulfil. By his death, or by the shedding of his blood, the covenant was made sure, and it was confirmed in the experience of multitudes who were brought to believe in him, both Jews and Gentiles, in consequence of his death. And it may refer also to the many that were brought to believe in him afterwards, in consequence of his work during that important week—the last seven years of the 490, here predicted. "And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." This intimates, that by his one atoning sacrifice, and by the promulgation of the news of its efficacy, he was to put an end to all the sacrifices and oblations that were offered under the law. He appeared in the end of the world to put away sin, and all sacrifices for sin, by the sacrifice of himself. This he was to do in the midst of the week, or as the word means, and is most frequently rendered in Scripture, "the half" of the week; intimating that during the last seven years of the period of 490 years, he was to confirm the covenant by his death, and in the latter half of these seven years he would cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. "And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate even until the consummation." This means, either that, on account of the overspreading of their abominable iniquities, especially in crucifying the Lord of glory, he would bring desolation upon them,

and upon their city; or it may refer to the abomination of the Roman, heathen army, spreading over their country, and entering into their city and temple, the effect of which was that desolation which God had determined to be poured upon them, for their iniquities, until they were wholly laid waste. This prediction brings down the prophetic history of the Jews to the destruction of Jerusalem, and their dispersion into the various nations of the world.

The following practical remarks are suggested from this chapter:—1. To understand God's providence aright, we must compare it with his Word. 2. The study of the Word of God will advance both the honour and advantages of the greatest men of this world. 3. The promises of God should form both an excitement to prayer, and the substance of our petitions at God's throne of grace. 4. In all our prayers we ought to make confession of our iniquities. 5. Sin is that which is calculated to fill us with shame and confusion of face. 6. To sin against repeated warnings by God's servants, is very heinous and provoking to God. 7. Sin is the reproach of any people, but especially of God's own people; and if persisted in, will not escape divine judgments. 8. The desolations of Zion are a grief to the people of God. 9. The deliverance which God grants in answer to prayer are for his own name's sake. 10. The importunate prayer of faith generally meets with a ready answer. 11. The wisest of God's people in this world are not above instruction. 12. God often dispenses his mercies in greater abundance than his judgments. There were but 70 years' captivity, but

there were 490 years' prosperity. 13. Messiah's work in this world was very great and important. 14. Christ has a time set for all his operations in this world. 15. The rejection of Christ and his gospel brings upon sinners the most fearful desolations.

CHAPTER X.

VERSES 1–9.—"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which *is* Hiddekel; then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins *were* girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground."

IN this and the two succeeding chapters we have

an account of the last vision which was presented to Daniel, and which contains a prediction, not only of the rise and fall of some of the kingdoms of the world in connection with the history of the Church, but also of the Church herself under Antichristian oppression, and in her deliverance from that oppression, and enlargement in her latter glory. These earthly kingdoms appear to be introduced into the prediction, on account of their connection with the oppression or enlargement of the Church, or in so far as they were symbolic of her enemies. In this chapter we have the introduction to the prophecy. 1. We have the time when it was revealed to Daniel—in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, and after the death of Darius his uncle, and in the four and twentieth day of the first month; which appears to have been about two years after the date of the preceding vision. Daniel must at this time have been above ninety years of age, for it was about seventy-three years after he was carried from the land of Judah to Babylon. 2. The nature of the revelation made to Daniel: a thing was revealed to him which was true—true in the statement made to him by the angelic messenger, and certain as to its accomplishment. The time appointed for its fulfilment was long, reaching to the destruction of the Antichristian system and the future glory of the Church; but the length of time did not affect the certainty of its fulfilment, for the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. One day is with him as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The vision was made so plain to the prophet that he understood the matter. 3. The circumstances in which this

vision were revealed to Daniel: it was about the time of his fasting and mourning, very likely at the close of it, for he mourned three full weeks; or, being literally rendered, three weeks of days—that is, three literal weeks; and most likely these were the first three weeks of the first month, and immediately after—on the four and twentieth day of the month he saw the vision. Daniel's fasting and mourning at this time was, no doubt, occasioned by the troubles which his people experienced in the malicious attempts of their enemies to prevent the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and perhaps also on account of the sins of the Jews, in their slackness in this important work. In this work of fasting he tells us that he denied himself, to a great extent, his ordinary food: "He ate no pleasant bread." Nor did he indulge in any luxuries: neither flesh nor wine came into his mouth, nor did he anoint himself with oil, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. 4. The place where Daniel had this vision: it was by the side of the great river Hiddekel, supposed to be the Tigris, near Shushan, where Daniel resided. It is very probable that Daniel was walking by the side of this river on this occasion, for devotion or for meditation, attended by some of his servants. 5. The vision itself—in which appeared to Daniel a personage of great splendour and glory: he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, &c. From the description given here, this "certain man" whom Daniel saw appears to have been none other than the Son of God, the Messiah. The description given of this personage by Daniel is almost the same as that which is given of Jesus Christ by John in the isle of Patmos

(Rev. i. 13, 14, &c.); and the resemblance is so striking that there can be little difficulty in seeing that the same person is referred to in both cases, and that Jesus Christ, and no other, is the glorious personage who at this time appeared to Daniel. He is described as "a certain man," appearing in human likeness as a prelude to his appearance in human nature. He is *a certain* man, or, he is *one*—that is, he has no equal among men or angels. He was clothed in linen, and his loins were girded with the finest gold—the fine gold of Uphas. Every thing about him must be the best of its kind. He appeared in the robes of the priesthood, being the great High Priest of his Church, and he was girded as one who is ready for his work. His body shone forth in the azure colour of the beryl, and the dazzling splendour of the lightning sparkled in his countenance. The penetrating glance of his eyes resembled the brightness of burning lamps; his arms and feet glittered like polished brass; and the voice of his words resembled the voice of a multitude. What splendour and glorious majesty is here! and yet these are but some of the faint rays of his glory, shaded and softened down to suit the weakness of mortal vision: but if such is his glory here, what must it be in heaven where it appears completely unveiled! Daniel was the only individual, among all the company walking by the side of the river, who was favoured with this glorious vision; for the men who were with him saw it not. They were so struck with terror, either at the unearthly sound of the voice of his words, or feeling the pressure of some supernatural effects upon their spirits, that a great quaking fell upon them, and they

fled from the scene, and hid themselves. Daniel was thus left alone, and he alone had the privilege of beholding this great vision. But while he alone enjoyed this privilege, its effects upon him were so overwhelming that he appears to have been brought almost to the verge of dissolution. He retained no strength, and the beauty of his countenance was changed into the paleness of death: "His comeliness was turned into corruption, and he retained no strength." So incapable is man in his present state to behold the glory, or to hold interviews with the inhabitants of heaven. Daniel, however, was able to hear the voice of his words; but so weak was he that he fell on his face toward the ground, and his senses were locked up in sleep.

VERSES 10–15.—"And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands: and he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision *is* for *many* days. And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb."

The hand that touched Daniel appears to have been that of an angel—probably the angel Gabriel, as on a

former occasion, who had been sent to arouse him from his slumber and strengthen him. He raised him up, and set him on his knees and upon the palms of his hands, and spake to him in language of compassion and comfort. He addresses him as a man greatly beloved, beloved of the Lord, and bids him listen to what he was now to communicate to him, and understand it; for to him he was sent with a message of instruction. Daniel was then enabled to stand upright, but he stood before the angel trembling. The angel bids him fear not, for he had come to give him instruction in answer to his prayer; and he tells him, for his encouragement, that the words of his prayer were heard from the first day that he did set his heart to understand and to chasten himself before his God. The angel evidently refers to Daniel's exercise described in chapter ix. 3, when, upon discovering, in the prophecies of Jeremiah, that the seventy years' captivity was drawing to a close, "he set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes." At that time his prayers were heard, and on account of these the angel had been sent to him with the message of God in answer to them. But the angel mentions a circumstance which happened at this time, which threatened to retard his mission—the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him one and twenty days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to his help. It is perhaps not very easy to determine who this prince of Persia was, or what the nature of that opposition was which he made to the angel who spake to Daniel. Some understand him to have been the chief ruler in

the Persian kingdom, who was laying schemes against the Church of God, and against their deliverance at this time, which appeared in the difficulties that were thrown in the way of the Jews building the temple, and in the obstructions cast in the way of their returning from Babylon. Others think, and with greater probability, that he was an evil spirit—one of the rulers of the darkness of this world, who during the three weeks, or the twenty one days, of Daniel's mourning, withstood the angel in his coming forth with the message of God to the prophet. It seems to have been a contest similar to that between the angel and Satan, recorded in Zech. iii. 1; or to the dispute between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses. But it may be, that these twenty-one days of opposition, which the angel encountered from this evil spirit, who seemed to have influenced the Persian enemies against the Church, symbolized the twenty-one years' opposition which the Jews met with from their enemies, stirred up no doubt by the emissaries of Satan, ere they were fully established in the land of Canaan. Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help him against this opposing spirit. Some understand Michael to be one of the chief of the created angels. In the Epistle of Jude, he is called an archangel. But we are disposed to adopt the views of those who understand him to be the uncreated angel of the covenant, or the Messiah; for although he is called by Jude an archangel, the appellation seems to refer, as the title chief prince here, to his superiority to all created angels. Hence we find the language spoken by him to Satan, as recorded by Jude, is the very same which he, as the

Lord, uses to Satan in Zech. iii. 1, and with the same authority: "The Lord rebuke thee." Again, in the close of this chapter, the angel, speaking to Daniel, calls him his prince—that is, the prince of the Jewish Church—and in the beginning of chapter xii. he is called "the great prince, who shall stand up for the children of Daniel's people." These appellations are in striking agreement with Joshua v. 13, where he takes the name, "The captain of the Lord's host,"—that is, either the supreme prince of the angels, the heavenly host of God, or the divine leader of the armies of Israel—God's host on earth at that time. The same dignity, and the same work which is ascribed to Michael in this prophecy, viz., the protection and defence of Israel, is ascribed to Jesus Christ, as the angel of the Lord, in Zech. i., where he is seen amid a troop of angels as the protector of his people. We might mention also, in corroboration of this view, that Michael was generally understood by the ancient Jews to be identical with "the angel of the Lord," who was known to be the Messiah, and in some parts of the Jewish Talmud he is associated with the Shekinah, or the glory of God, which rested on the mercy-seat. There can be little doubt then that Michael, who came to help the angel here against the spirit who ruled over the Persian opponents of the Church, was the uncreated angel of the covenant, the Messiah: in him the angel had a powerful helper; and he informs Daniel that he then remained with the kings of Persia. For what purpose he does not say, but very likely to watch over the affairs of the Church, and to counteract the schemes and the opposition of her enemies. And now the

angel tells Daniel that he was come "to make him understand what shall befall his people in the latter days." Daniel had been praying for the future prosperity of the Church, and the angel is sent to give him information concerning it. He had been mourning over the afflictions and the trials and the difficulties of the Church, and now the angel is to show him greater difficulties that yet awaited her, and greater deliverance in reserve for her. The latter days refer, not only to the times that immediately succeeded the deliverance from captivity to the days of Messiah, but to the future history of the Church throughout the New Testament dispensation. Hence he says, "the vision is yet for many days." It is to contain the events of many days or many years beyond the time of Israel's deliverance from Babylon and the period of their restoration to Canaan—many days beyond the weeks between their deliverance and the appearance of Messiah. The words of the angel made a deep and solemn impression upon Daniel. He set his face toward the ground in solemn thought, and he became dumb with admiration and astonishment; so weak is flesh and blood in the presence of spirits.

VERSES 16–21.—"And, behold, *one* like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and

touched me *one* like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me. And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace *be* unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince."

Daniel here informs us how he was relieved from this state of silent astonishment. We have no account of the angel appearing visibly to him, in this vision, previous to this. He felt only the touch of his hand raising him up from his deep sleep into which he had fallen, and setting him upon his knees, although he heard his words distinctly. But now he appears visibly to him, in human form, and touched his lips. Then he was enabled to open his mouth, and speak to the angel that stood before him; and he described to him his feeling of weakness in consequence of the vision. He addresses the angel in language of respect —he calls him *lord*, and tells him that he felt the sorrows of a temporary prostration of strength, and on that account, and also from the greatness of the glory of his presence, he was unable to talk with him. He felt himself so insignificant in his presence, and his strength and his breath so exhausted, that he was unable to speak. In mercy and compassion to the suffering prophet, the angel came to him again, in human form, and touched him, and by this means infused strength into his weakened frame, and having done

so, and enabled the prophet to listen to his message, he addresses him in language the most encouraging. He tells him that he is a man greatly beloved, in favour both with God and man, and he bids him "be strong, yea, be strong," which words were the means of strengthening him, and Daniel was enabled to say, "Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me." The angel then addresses him in the form of a question —"Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee?" intimating that he had come for a certain purpose. He had come to inform him regarding God's future dispensations toward the Church, and toward some of these kingdoms whose history was connected with that of the Church, and also concerning the part that he—the angel—had to act in this matter. He had to "return to fight with the prince of Persia"—that powerful spirit already referred to in verse 13. This angel that talked with Daniel was about to return to oppose him, and to fight against his schemes, which he was devising against the people of God. He informs Daniel also that when he had gone forth—that is, from the presence of his Lord and Master—to execute his commission, "the prince of Grecia shall come;" whom some understand to have been another hostile spirit against the Church, stirring up the ruler of the Grecian empire to oppress and persecute her; but others think that he was some angelic power, pleading for the Persian empire being translated to the Greeks, for the benefit of the Jewish nation: but of his real character and design, the angel gives us no account, showing that a knowledge of this matter was unnecessary. But the angel tells Daniel that he would show him

what was recorded in the Word of God, what God had in his design, and what had, in several parts of divine revelation, in former times, been referred to, and therefore would assuredly come to pass. And he tells him farther, that "none holdeth with him in these matters, but Michael your prince"—that is, as has already been shown, the Son of God, the Messiah. He is the Prince of the Church; and his holding with the angel in these things may refer to his intimate knowledge of all these matters that were to happen in God's providence toward his Church, and to his taking the side of this angel in matters tending to the advancement of the interests of the Church of God, and also to his being the protector of his Church, and the director and governor of these matters, and sending forth his angels to carry on his work.

The following remarks are deducible from this chapter:—1. Divine revelations of God's servants often impress the mind so deeply that the very time and place are kept in remembrance. 2. No length of time between the prophecy and the fulfilment ever invalidates the truth of the prediction. 3. In the present imperfect state of the Church, there are many things that call for fasting and humiliation. 4. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in great condescension, has often displayed bright glimpses of his glory in this world. 5. In our present imperfect state, we cannot endure the presence of the inhabitants of heaven. 6. God gives strength to his servants for the work which he assigns them. 7. The assurance of our prayers being heard is very encouraging. 8. The angels of heaven take a

deep interest in the affairs of the Church on earth, and often fight her battles. 9. Angels are sometimes the messengers by whom God reveals his will to men. 10. Divine strength is necessary for divine service. 11. The messages of angels must be according to the Scripture. 12. Jesus Christ, as the king of his Church, is ever upon her side.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSES 1–4.—"Also I, in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even* I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now will I show thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those."

IN this chapter, and the following, the angel fulfils his promise to Daniel (chapter x. 14), that he would "make him understand what shall befall his people in the latter days." He informs him that he had been employed in working out the deliverance of the Jewish nation from their captivity, inasmuch as, in the first year of Darius the Mede, he had stood by him and strengthened him in the overthrow of Babylon, and had confirmed him in his resolution to release the Jews, and to promote the execution of the decree of Cyrus for their return to Palestine. "And now," says he, "I will show thee truth." He was now to give Daniel a more enlarged

view of some of the facts already exhibited to him in the vision contained in the 8th chapter. The prophetic history of the Medo-Persian empire was now to be given in detail, with its influence and effects upon the Church of God; and the *truth* which the angel was to show to the prophet, refers, not only to the truth of the statement, but to the certainty of its accomplishment, and this *truth* was the farther development of part of the former visions given to Daniel. Respecting the kingdom of Persia, he tells him that, besides the present monarch Darius, there were yet three kings to stand up, and also a fourth, who was to be far richer than them all. These three kings were—1. Cambyses, who in Scripture is called Ahasuerus; 2. Smerdis, who is called Artaxerxes; and, 3. Darius, the son of Hystaspes. And the fourth king was Xerxes, who raised a very numerous army. According to Herodotus, his sea and land forces, in his expedition against Greece, amounted to 2,641,610 men; but, including servants, women, and other attendants, usually found following an army, and of which the number at that time was equal to that of the forces, the whole number of souls that followed Xerxes, in that expedition, is said to have amounted to 5,283,220. Great and powerful as his army was, however, he was defeated, and returned almost alone. In the Grecian kingdom, the angel informs Daniel, that "a mighty king shall stand up, and rule with great dominion, and do according to his will." This was Alexander the Great, referred to in chapter viii., who was prefigured by the rough goat, which smote the ram and brake his horns —the figure of the Medo-Persian monarchy. His

power and his conquests, for a time, none was able to withstand. But when he stood up against the king of Persia, his kingdom was broken, as here predicted, and divided toward the four winds of heaven—not to his posterity, nor according to the mode of his own government, but seized upon by his four generals, and divided amongst them.

VERSES 5–20.—"And the king of the south shall be strong, and *one* of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion *shall be* a great dominion. And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in *these* times. But out of a branch of her roots shall *one* stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail; and shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, *and* with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue *more* years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into *his* kingdom, and shall return into his own land. But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and *one* shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through; then shall he return, and be stirred up, *even* to his fortress. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, *even* with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand. *And* when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down *many* ten thou-

sands: but he shall not be strengthened *by it*. For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army, and with much riches. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities; and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither *shall there be any* strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed. He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her; but she shall not stand *on his side*, neither be for him. After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause *it* to turn upon him. Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble, and fall, and not be found. Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes *in* the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither with anger, nor in battle."

In this part of the chapter we have an account of leagues and conflicts between two great powers, during the period between Alexander the Great and Antiochus Epiphanes. These seem to be the two chief divisions of Alexander's dominions, and the kings that made the greatest figure of all his successors. And they seem to have been the only powers that were concerned in the affairs of the Jews. They are denominated "the king of the south," and "the king of the

north;" the king of the north being the reigning monarch of Syria, and the king of the south the monarch who reigned over Egypt, Palestine, part of Lybia, Cœlo-Syria, and most of the maritime provinces of the Lesser Asia. This southern monarch was to be strong; but one of the princes which succeeded Alexander, viz., the king of Syria, was to be stronger than he, and to have very great power and dominion. In the end of the years, or in process of time, under the reign of succeeding monarchs, the two kings were to attempt a union, by means of a marriage between the king of Syria and the daughter of the king of Egypt; but the intended scheme did not succeed. The daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus king of Egypt, was married to Antiochus Theus, king of Syria; but, as predicted, "she did not retain the power of the arm," neither did "he stand nor his arm." For as soon as Ptolemy was dead, Antiochus divorced his wife, and recalled his former wife Laodice and her children, which he had formerly put away. Nor did he long survive the deed; for Laodice, being jealous of her husband, caused him to be poisoned, and concealed his death till her son Seleucus had secured the succession. The wife whom Antiochus had divorced was, according to the prediction, "given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her," or, as the margin reads it, "he whom she brought forth." That is, as recorded by historians, she had shut herself up in a place of refuge, but was betrayed into her enemy's hands and basely murdered, with all who attended her out of Egypt. According to the prediction in verses 7 and 8, the brother of the divorced and murdered queen, who had succeeded his father in Egypt,

and who is here said to be "a branch of her root," came out of Egypt with a great army, to avenge his sister's quarrel, and prevailed against the king of Syria, made himself master of the country as far as Babylon, and carried immense riches and captives into Egypt, with two thousand five hundred idols, which Cambyses, king of Syria, upon his conquest of Egypt, had long before carried into Babylon. The sons of the king of Syria, taking advantage of the death of the king of Egypt, and the succession of his son Ptolemy Philopater, a weak and profligate prince, raised an army (verse 10), and endeavoured to recover what their father Evergetes had lost. One of these sons died about the beginning of the enterprise—some say he was poisoned; but the other overran a great part of the south country. The king of the south—of Egypt—came forth against him, however, with great indignation, and the multitude of the king of Syria was given into his hand. The consequence of which was, his heart became elated with pride; but although he overthrew many ten thousands, he was not strengthened by it: for the king of Syria raised a greater army than the one that had been overcome, and after some years, some say fourteen, he came against him with great power and riches. Also many of the neighbouring nations stood up against the king of Egypt, to assist the king of Syria; while the robbers of the Jews, the apostates from the Jewish law, endeavoured to assist the king of Egypt in persecuting the people of the Jews, but were destroyed by the king of Syria, who had made himself master of Jerusalem, and cut off all the Jews who had assisted the king of Egypt. Even the king of the south could not stand

before him, when he cast up a mount and took the mos fenced cities. The king of the north carried all before him, and entered into the glorious land of Judea, and with the spoils of it victualled his army. It was consumed by his hand. According to the prediction in verse 17, he brought his whole force, or the strength of his kingdom, to enter into the kingdom of Egypt, while many of the upright in Israel joined him in the expedition. He also gave the king of Egypt his daughter Cleopatra to wife, in order to be a snare unto him; but the scheme failed, for she espoused the interests of her husband, and thus defeated his plan. After this, according to the prediction in verses 18 and 19, he turned his face unto the isles, and took many of these belonging to the Romans in the Mediterranean Sea; but the Romans, by a certain prince or commander, Lucius Scipio, caused the reproach which he had cast upon them to return upon himself—referring to the victory gained by the Romans, by 30,000 men against 70,000 of the Syrians, in consequence of which a heavy tribute was laid upon him by the Romans. Being in a great strait as to how he was to raise it, he attempted to plunder the temple of Jupiter in his own country, on account of which his subjects rose against him and put him to death. Thus he stumbled and fell, and was not to be found. After him was to stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes. This was fulfilled in his eldest son Seleucus who succeeded him, and who was a great extortioner and oppressor. His reign was but short, and he was destroyed "neither in anger nor in battle;" some read the words, "in the glory of the kingdom," "and shall destroy the glory of the kingdom;" and indeed

this seems to have been the sole employment of his reign. He reigned about eleven years, and came to a miserable end, being poisoned by his servant.

VERSES 21–27—"And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league *made* with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do *that* which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers: he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: *yea*, and he shall forecast his devices against the strongholds, even for a time. And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him. Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow; and many shall fall down slain. And both these kings' hearts *shall be* to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end *shall be* at the time appointed."

The vile person referred to here, and who is the subject of the prediction to the close of the chapter, was Antiochus Epiphanes, the brother and successor of Seleucus, and son of Antiochus the Great. He was a cruel persecutor of the Jews; his oppressions are referred to in chapter x. 14, as that which was to befall the people of Israel in the latter days.

And he is symbolized, in chapter viii. 9, by the little horn which was to spring out of one of the four large horns of the Grecian he-goat. But it is quite evident, as has already been noticed, that he was the type of Antichrist, or the Man of Sin, who was to make his appearance under the New Testament dispensation. Primarily he was the little horn which pushed and oppressed the ancient people of God; but ultimately he was "the wicked one," who sits in the temple of God, and exalts himself above all that is called God and worshipped. It will be easy to discern the striking similitude between this vile person and the Antichrist, or Man of Sin, under the New Testament dispensation, when we attend to the prophetic description given of him here. It is worthy of notice, that the ancient prophets, in speaking of the Church and kingdom of Israel, often slide into a description of the kingdom of Christ under the New Testament dispensation; and in speaking of the *enemies* of the Church, they are often led into the description of the Antichristian system. An instance of this we have in the case before us. And as Antiochus was a violent persecutor of the Jews, who were the professed people of God, and was also to be a type of the Antichrist, who in after times was to persecute the Church of Christ, on that account he is more particularly described in this prophecy than any other prince mentioned in it.

1. Regarding his character, he is described in the prediction as "a vile person:" "In his estate,"—that is, in the estate or room of his predecessor,—"shall stand up a vile person." His character fully answered the description. He was a person given to all kinds

of wickedness, and guilty of the lowest and most debasing crimes. Historians speak of him as a deceiver, whose actions more resembled those of a madman than of a reasonable being. In this he was a fit symbol of Antichrist. No system has ever exhibited a character so vile, or has perpetrated deeds of wickedness so abominable, as this. Nations have been deceived by the cup of the filthiness of the fornication of this mystical Babylon, and she has often appeared drunken to frantic madness with the blood of the saints. 2. Again, as to his obtaining possession of the kingdom, he entered upon it peaceably, and obtained it by flatteries and deceit, although the honour or the right of government was not conceded to him. He did not obtain the crown by right of birth, or by the free choice of the people. By a cunning artifice he succeeded in having Demetrius, his eldest brother's son, and heir of the crown, sent to Rome as a hostage for himself, while he pretended to reign for him in his absence, and thus supplanted him in the kingdom; and according to the prediction in verse 22, the Syrians, who, under Heliodorus, the murderer of his brother Seleucus, opposed him, were overthrown and broken as "with the arms of a flood." "Also the prince of the covenant" was subdued by him—understood by some to have been Onias, the high priest of the Jews, who was deposed and banished by Antiochus, and afterward murdered by one of his officers. But the prediction seems rather to refer to the king of the south, the reigning monarch of Egypt, with whom, after he had conquered him, he had made a league; but, acting the part of a deceiver, or, as it is here expressed,

"working deceitfully," he came up against him a second time, with a small army, and overcame him in battle: and, by unprecedented movements, he took peaceable possession of the richest places of the province of Egypt, scattering among his army the prey, the spoil, and the riches of the country. Even the strongholds of the country are represented as having for a time fallen into his power. In verse 25 we have a prophetic account of a fearful contest between these two monarchs, in which Antiochus came against the king of Egypt with a great army, which was opposed by a very great and powerful army of the king of Egypt; but in this contest the king of Egypt was defeated, by the devices of Antiochus and his advisers. While he was laying his plans for the war against the Syrians, his own subjects—"they that fed of the portion of his meat"—rose against him, and took away his life. In verse 27 both these kings—the king of Syria and of Egypt—are represented as being set on mischief, and speaking lies at one table, which seems to refer to their deceitful league, previous to Antiochus' invasion of Egypt, or to a pretended league between Antiochus and the successor of Ptolemy, king of Egypt. But such schemes were not to prosper, for the event was appointed in the Divine purpose; and in spite of all their schemes, it would and did happen according to God's appointment. It may be proper to remark here, that it is merely the outline of these events that is given in the prophecy; the particulars will be found in the writings of the historians, who narrate the events of that period. (See Rollin, lib. xviii.) In all this we see the type of Antichrist, who, by deceitful

working and pretended philanthropy, gained possession of power and influence among the kingdoms of the world, and who has never been slack to employ the weapons of the powers of the world to gain his purposes—who has even subdued earthly kingdoms in order to increase his own power, entered upon the fattest places of their province, and turned them into his abject vassals and slaves.

VERSES 28–35—"Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant; and he shall do *exploits*, and return to his own land. At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south: but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate. And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many; yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days. Now, when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed."

We have here the predicted return of Antiochus, king of Syria, from Egypt, into his own country with

great riches, and a reference made to his heart-felt hatred to the Jews, and his opposition to their worship, here called "the holy covenant," and his exploits in attempting to turn them from the worship of the true God to heathen idolatry. Again, at a certain time, called here "the time appointed," he returned and came against Egypt, but not with that success which characterized any of his former expeditions: for we are told, in verse 30, that "the ships of Chittim shall come against him," which was fulfilled in the check which he experienced from Popilius and other Roman ambassadors, who brought against him a fleet which they found at Delos, composed of Macedonian ships —as the Hebrew word Chittim signifies—and obliged him to lay down his arms, and return from Egypt. Feeling great grief and disappointment at this, and returning with great reluctance, in his rage and fury he wreaked his vengeance upon the Jews, the worshippers of the true God. At that time some of the Jews basely forsook the worship of God; they forsook the holy covenant, and turned to the side of Antiochus against their brethren. With these he corresponded, and obtained their assistance in his persecutions against the people of God. "During the siege of Alexandria," says Rollin, "a report had prevailed that Antiochus was dead, and the Jews had been accused (most likely by their apostate brethren) of expressing great joy at it. He thereupon marched to their city, stormed it, and exercised all the barbarity that his fury could suggest. About 40,000 men were killed, and the same number sold as slaves, in the compass of three days. Antiochus went into the temple, polluted it, and

carried off all the vessels, treasures, and rich ornaments." He also caused the daily sacrifice to be discontinued, and placed in the temple of God a statue or an image of Jupiter Olympus, called, in verse 31, "the abomination that maketh desolate." God's temple is here called "the sanctuary of strength," because it was a token of the divine protection, being the place of God's special residence among the Jews. His sanctuary was profaned by the unhallowed presence and idol worship of this heathen persecutor, and doubly profaned by the apostate Jews who "stood on his part," and assisted him in such desolating profanity. They were the transgressors who "did wickedly against the covenant," being "corrupted by his flatteries," and whose character formed a contrast with those mentioned in verse 32—"the people who knew their God, and was strong, and did exploits;" which description is supposed to refer to some noble and pious Jews who courageously opposed the impious orders of the Syrian monarch, and, in spite of his flatteries or his tortures, refused to bow to his idols. The prediction in verse 33 refers to those among the Jews who were wise, and who, even in the midst of persecution, instructed their brethren, and thus armed them against the temptations by which heathens endeavoured to persuade them to forsake the worship of the true God. These, however, were not excepted from persecution: "they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days"—the fearful instruments uniformly employed by the persecutors in their diabolical rage against the people of God. In God's adorable providence, however, we are told, in verse 34, that assistance

to some extent should be afforded them; and seeing their cause gaining ground for a little, "many shall cleave to them by flatteries"—many would then help them, who would not in the days of their defeat countenance or regard them. We are told, in verse 35, that those men of wisdom who fell under the sword of the persecutor were, in God's inscrutable providence, allowed to do so, "that they might be tried and purged, and made white, even to the time of the end." Their death was their glory and triumph; in this was their sanctification perfected; and doubtless many who witnessed their sufferings were led to believe in God, and to become righteous and holy. The language seems to intimate that the effects of their sufferings and death for the cause of God were to be felt in the Church as the means of turning many to righteousness, in the future period of her history, "even to the time of the end." So long as persecution was continued, so long would God overrule it for purging and purifying his Church and people, and increasing her zeal and her glory. The blood of the martyrs has often become the seed of the Church, and the prophet intimates that God has his set time appointed for this; but when "the time of the end" comes, he shall break every weapon of persecution, and utterly consume every system of tyranny and oppression.

Surely, if ever there was a living type of the Antichristian system on the surface of the globe, he is to be found in this vile persecutor. In this horrid symbol of tyranny and cruelty we see the prominent features of the Man of Sin standing forth in striking and

fearful likeness. Does not Antichrist, like this crowned deceiver, set his heart against the holy covenant—the pure word and worship of the true God? Does he not, in the pride and ambition of his heart, subdue and dethrone earthly kings; or, if thwarted in his purpose, has he not often vented his rage and his fury in dire persecution against the people of God? Does he not often endeavour to gain over to his side the professing people of God, and employ them against the Church? Has he not often suppressed, or endeavoured to suppress, the true worship of God in his Church, and set up in its room the false, the idol worship of his own devising, and often desolated God's house with such abomination? Nay, this is the very note that Christ takes of the character of Antichrist: "The abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel." And these persecutions of Antiochus against the pious Jews were just the emblem, and exhibited the spirit, of the countless bloody and cruel persecutions of Antichrist against the Church of Christ in after ages. And these noble spirits among the Jews, who resisted the persecutions of the heathen monarch, were the types of the numerous host of martyrs, who have fallen under the persecution of the Man of Sin. The language in verse 35 evidently indicates that this awful process of the persecution of God's dear saints, permitted and overruled by God for the purifying of his Church and people, would be continued from the type to the antitype, "even to the time of the end."

But let us turn our eye to the next scene of this prediction, and we shall see greater abominations than these: we shall see this typical Antichrist, not only

opposing and persecuting God's people, but, in daring blasphemy, opposing and speaking against the God of heaven, and appearing, even in typical prediction, almost in the very form and features of his antitype, the Man of Sin.

VERSES 36–39.—"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain."

Notice is first taken of the proud despotism of this Syrian monarch—"He shall do according to his will;" and of his proud contempt of all religion—"He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god"—that is, against all heathen gods. He plundered the temples of Greece, and wished to rob others of their riches and wealth. But what was still more daring: "He shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." This he did in his persecutions against God's people at Jerusalem, and in the profanation of God's temple. His language as well as his actions were against the God of heaven; and God in his mysterious dispensa-

tions allowed him to prosper, and to perpetrate all these blasphemies and abominations in his temple, until his people were chastened, and his own purposes were accomplished: "For that that is determined shall be done." Even the god of his fathers, the gods of the Syrians, were disregarded. His heart seems to have been so hardened and devilish as to be destitute of human affection, and so brutalized as to be without any religious feeling: "He did not regard the desire of women, nor regard any god," but "magnified himself above all." But in verse 38 we are told that in his estate, in his power and glory, "he shall honour the god of forces, a god whom his fathers knew not;" which some think was Jupiter Olympus, who was never introduced into the number of the gods of Syria until this monarch did it. Others suppose this god to have been an idol of wealth or money, whose worshippers he caused to be maintained out of the taxes of the country. Perhaps it was some idol that he had erected as an imaginary god of battles, which he endeavoured to propitiate with costly gifts for the success of his armies. Whatever he was, he seems to have honoured him in the strongholds and fortified places of his kingdom. By means of these he ruled over many, and divided the countries over which he reigned, for levying tribute, in order to supply his extravagance.

In this part of his character and history also we have an expressive type of the New Testament Antichrist, who in his arrogant pride "sets himself above all that is called God and worshipped," and opens his mouth in blasphemy against the God of heaven. In his "doctrine of devils, forbidding to marry," and im-

posing on his priesthood an anti-scriptural and demoralizing celibacy, we see the antitype of this vile person, in his disregard for the desire of women, and his attempt to magnify himself above all rule, both of God and man. It is also the character of Antichrist that he honours the god of forces, pays homage to the armies that support his cause, pronounces his blessing upon them, upon their colours, and upon their murderous weapons; and portions out the very territories of earthly princes into Episcopal divisions, for the conveniency of his tyrannical rule, and for the collection of his tribute. But, though long permitted to oppress, this fearful system must come to an end: of this we have a graphic description in the remaining part of the prediction, regarding this wicked and persecuting monarch of Syria.

VERSES 40–45.—"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *shall be* at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in

the glorious holy mountain: yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

The angel having given Daniel a prophetic description of the character and deeds of this typical Antichrist, now shows him his end, with some further particulars in the latter part of his history. Towards the end, the king of the south—that is, of Egypt—shall push at him. This refers to the attempt made by the king of Egypt to check his progress; for, toward the latter part of his life, his rage seems to have been directed against Egypt and Palestine. The Egyptians and the Jews seem to have been marked out as its devoted victims. The opposition of Egypt's monarch was in vain; for "the king of the north"—viz., Antiochus—"would come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots," &c. He overwhelmed him with his armies, and with his formidable fleet. He entered into his country and took possession. In his fury, also, he entered into Palestine, having turned his forces against that country, in consequence of the news being brought him of a revolt of the Jews; and upon many of them, as has already been noticed, he exercised the most horrid cruelties. Edom, and Moab, and Ammon, at this time escaped out of his power. Egypt, however, and the countries that lay between it and Syria, did not escape. He had power over their treasures, having their riches at his command, and the Libyans and Ethiopians became his vassals and tributaries. But in the midst of these successes, and when he was forming a resolution to force the Jews to give up their religion, and embrace heathen idolatry, "tidings out of the east and out of the north troubled him." News were brought him

that the Parthians on the east, and the Armenians on the north, had revolted against him, and were in arms against his government. This kindled his fury, which he directed against the Jews: "He shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." While he himself went forth against those that lay on the east of Euphrates, he gave Lysias, whom he appointed regent of the kingdom in his absence, the half of his army, with orders to extirpate all the Jews, and to settle other nations in their country. His "planting the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain," seems to refer to the encampment of his army, or the erection of the tents of his Court on some of the mountains near Jerusalem, between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, with the intention of the final and complete overthrow of the Jews, and the destruction of their worship. While Lysias, his chief general, was thus preparing for the intended overthrow of the Jews, Antiochus, having heard that the temple of Elymais, which was dedicated to Diana, abounded with riches, went to plunder it, but was shamefully repulsed by the inhabitants of that country and city rising against him, and forced to withdraw to a distance. At that time the news reached him of the defeat of his armies in the land of Judea, and of the Jews retaking the temple, and throwing down his idols, and setting up their ancient worship. This kindled his fury to a fearful extent, and he threatened to make Jerusalem the burying place of the whole Jewish nation, and not to leave a single inhabitant in it. Historians inform us that he had scarcely uttered these blasphemous expressions, when he was

struck by the hand of God, being seized with the most fearful pains in his bowels, which, instead of producing penitence, excited him to wilder transports of fury, in which he breathed nothing but vengeance against the Jews. By a fall from his chariot, his disease increased, until he suffered the most inexpressible torments, under which he was forced to acknowledge that it was the hand of God upon him, because of the calamities he had brought upon Jerusalem. While the worms were crawling from every part of his body, and his flesh falling off piecemeal, the smell of which became intolerable to the whole army, he attempted to propitiate the wrath of the Almighty, by promising to enrich God's temple with gifts, and to become a Jew himself; but these promises, extorted by the violence of present affliction, and the fear of future torments, were disregarded by God, whose temple he had profaned, and whose people he had persecuted, and he finished an impious life by a miserable death: "He came to his end, and none could help him."

Such have been the inroads that Antichrist, the antitype of this persecutor, has made, both upon the Church of Christ and upon the nations of the earth, and such shall be the rage and fury which he shall exhibit against God's holy mountain—God's own Church—about the time when his end is approaching. Never did the Antichristian system manifest such wrath and indignation against the Church of Christ and against the cause of civil and religious liberty, as he will do in his last struggles for existence: "He shall go forth to destroy, and utterly to make away many." Feeling his throne shaking by the gigantic and increasing heav-

ings of enlightened and liberal opinion, his dark and dismal tyranny fading and withering away under the gladdening light of advancing knowledge, and the multitudes of his "many waters," "his peoples, and nations, and tongues," drying up and turning aside from their Euphratean channel, under the pouring out of the sixth angel's vial; feeling this, he shall not only attempt to set up "the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain, to plant his gorgeous standard of Antichristian superstition, his flagstaff of Popish delusion, in that land of liberty, where "the glorious holy mountain" of God's house has long blossomed as the rose, and where the children of Zion have long sat under their vine and under their fig-tree, none making them afraid; but he shall, by his unclean spirits of diabolical machination, "gather the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to the battle of the great day of God Almighty." But "he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." That stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, is rolling down its declivity with fearfully accelerated motion, and shall soon smite the image upon its feet, and shall strew the plains of mystical Babylon with its ruins. The time is fast approaching, when the vine of the earth shall be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, and shall be trodden, in awful judgment, by Him who once came with dyed garments from Bozrah. The predicted period seems to be at no great distance, when the field of Armageddon shall witness the final overthrow of all the armies of Antichrist, by Him who sits on the white horse, and whose vesture is dipped in blood; and when Babylon shall be seen in flames, amid the wailings of

her blinded votaries, whose helpless efforts to save her shall prove utterly fruitless and vain.

The predictions in this chapter suggest the following observations:—1. The fate of kings and nations is under the control and direction of Divine Providence: "He puts down one, and sets another up." 2. Wars and fightings arise out of the pride and ambition of men. 3. All God's predictions regarding the fate of kingdoms shall be verified. 4. God sometimes employs men who are ignorant of him or of his designs as the instruments of fulfilling his purposes. 5. The power and the designs of the greatest monarch can extend no farther than God permits them. 6. God sometimes permits his own Church to be trampled upon by wicked men, on account of her transgressions. 7. In marvellous condescension, God often exercises patience and long-suffering with sinners who blaspheme his name, and trample upon his statutes. 8. The most abandoned character in this world feels the necessity of having a god of some kind or other. Antiochus spake against the God of heaven, and disowned the god of his fathers, but he must, after all, have a god to whom he gives honour, viz., the god of forces. So much is this felt, even by the depraved human mind, that rather than want a god, a man will take a stock or a stone for his god. How fearfully degrading is sin! 9. Every blasphemous and persecuting system shall be destroyed and brought to an end, and that without remedy.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSES 1–4.—"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one *that shall be* found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

IN this chapter the angel is still going on with the prophetic narrative. Having foretold the character, the reign, the deeds of wickedness, and the end of Antichrist, under the figure of the blasphemous and persecuting king of Syria, he now leads us into the awful scene of God's dispensations about the time of the overthrow of the Antichristian system. In the preceding chapter he gives us a pictorial or typical representation of the deeds and of the overthrow of Antichrist, in the prophetic history of Antiochus; but in this chapter he lifts the curtain, and exhibits the scene in its reality; thus, as is often the case in prophecy, gently shifting the scene from typical to anti-typical representation.

"At that time," says he, "shall Michael stand up;" that is, about the time when the Antichristian persecuting system shall come to its end, and none shall help it. To whatever extent this prophecy may have been fulfilled, shortly after the death of Antiochus, or at the end of the seventy weeks, when Messiah appeared in our world, and came in his judgments upon Jerusalem, it appears quite evident that the prophecy does not terminate there, but reaches forward to the scene of God's judgments upon the Antichristian system, and the deliverance of the Church of Christ from Antichristian tyranny; a scene which has yet to be disclosed, in God's adorable providence, and which seems at present to be at no great distance: and this, we think, is evident from the following considerations:—1. There is here a prediction of Israel's deliverance, and that after being long scattered. Compare verses 1 and 7, which evidently refer to their restoration in the latter days of the gospel. 2. There is an awakening from the dust predicted here, which did not happen at the time of the overthrow of Antiochus, but which has yet to be accomplished. 3. There is a brightening of the gospel and an increase of knowledge predicted, which, according to all other prophetic declarations, is the characteristic of the period of the overthrow of Antichristian power and delusion: and, 4. There is the long period of time given, which was to intervene between the prediction and its fulfilment, or between the setting up of the abomination of desolation and "the end of these wonders," viz., "the time, times, and an half." (Verse 7.) These, as well as other facts in the prophetic narrative, warrant us to

view the prediction here as referring to the time of the overthrow of Antichrist, and the introduction of the millennial glory of the Church of Christ. "At that time," the angel tells Daniel, "shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of his people." As we have already noticed, this great prince, whose name is Michael, is the Messiah. His greatness appears in the matchless dignity of his person and character; in the superior honour, power, and authority conferred upon him; and in the vast extent of his kingdom. His standing up at this time is indicative of his extraordinary dispensations of providence, and his decisive measures with the Antichristian system; and also of the wonderful display of his power and his mercy toward his ancient people the Jews. When God is represented in Scripture as "standing up," or "rising up," it is generally to execute some fearful judgment upon his enemies, or to work some great deliverance to his people. When he threatens to consume the enemies of Zion as "burnings of lime," or as "thorns cut up and burnt in the fire," he says, "Now will I rise; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself." (Isa. xxxiii. 10.) And when his terrible judgments shall soak the earth with blood, and strew its surface with the slain, and Israel be brought up out of their graves, as a people that had long been dead, intimation is given of the terrible scene, in the Lord rising up out of his place for judgment: "Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." (Isa. xxvi. 21.) And at this time, when Michael the great prince shall stand up for the posterity of Israel, he will bring fear-

ful judgments upon his enemies, and work out a great deliverance for his people. At that eventful period he will sweep the earth with such unprecedented judgments, as shall totally consume every Antichristian system, and pave the way for the restoration of the Jews, with the fulness of the Gentiles: "And there shall be a time of trouble," says the angel, "such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time." Christ, in his prediction of the same event, in Matt. xxiv. 21, gives the same account of it: "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be." And he tells us that this was the consequence of the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place; which evidently shows, that whatever calamities befell the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem, the great tribulation spoken of in Christ's prediction referred ultimately to the awful judgments with which he is to visit the world at the time of the overthrow of Antichrist; and these are to be such as have never been equalled by any that have been sent upon our world to that time.

But we are informed here, that at that time the Jews shall be delivered. The judgments inflicted upon God's enemies shall be deliverance to the Church. The day of vengeance upon Antichrist will be the year of Christ's redeemed. This prophetic declaration regarding the deliverance of the Jews serves as an index to the period to which the prediction especially refers, for it evidently refers to a time that is yet future, and to their deliverance from that long captivity

and desolation into which they have been sent, by the judgment of God scattering them among the nations of the world these eighteen hundred years, and to their being brought back to their allegiance to Jesus Christ, as their king and head. They shall then be delivered from their state of desertion, from their blindness and infidelity, from their degradation among the nations of the world, and from the oppression and persecution to which they have been subjected: and when Christ stands up for their deliverance and restoration, not one of them shall be lost or overlooked—"Every one found written in the book" shall be delivered; in the book of God's purposes—in that book in which he has enrolled the name of every son of Israel that is to be restored.*

* It is worthy of notice, that the prediction represents the deliverance of the Jews, or, in other words, their embracing Christianity, as the consequence of the overthrow of Antichrist by the awful judgments of God; evidently showing that, until the Antichristian system is destroyed, Israel cannot be restored, or brought to embrace Christianity. The Jews, in their present scattered state throughout the nations of the world, see little of Christianity, but as it is presented to their view in the Roman Catholic Church; and in that Church it is so mixed with the worship of saints and idols, that every Israelite abhors it. Their captivity in Babylon—the land of idols—so completely disgusted them at idolatry, that they can never endure it since; and in their present position, being so little acquainted with *pure Christianity*, it cannot be expected that they will embrace a system which to them appears filled with idols I once asked the Rev. Dr Phillips, the Jewish Missionary what he thought was the great objection which his people had to Christianity, or the chief barrier that lay in their way of embracing it. To which he replied, "IT'S THE IDOLATRY OF CHRISTIANITY. In the greater part of the world, whither they

The prediction in verse 2, is very often applied to the general resurrection, when all that are in their graves shall come forth at the time when Christ appears to judgment; and no doubt this is a proof of that doctrine, as well as a graphic description of the scene. Death is here, as in several parts of God's Word, compared to a sleep—to a sleep in the dust. As sleep locks up our senses from all surrounding objects, so death draws the curtain between us and the objects of the present world. But this sleep in the dust shall not be for ever: "They that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." At the sound of the last trump the inhabitants of the tomb shall be aroused from their slumber, and shall awake out of the dust—some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. But the resurrection is sometimes employed in Scripture as the figure of the restoration or revival of God's Church. In Ezek. xxxvii. the restoration of Israel from Babylon, is predicted under the figure of a resurrection of dry bones in the midst of a valley. Having shown the prophet the process of quickening, and employed him to prophesy as the means of it, God says, "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." In Hosea vi. 2, the revival of the Church is spoken of under the same figure: "After two days he will revive us; in the third

are scattered, *they* see Christianity only as it appears in the Church of Rome, which is full of idols; and you know we cannot endure the idea of idolatry ever since our forefathers were in Babylon." Which rational statement exactly accords with this prediction.

day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." According to this mode of prophetic symbol, the resurrection referred to in verse 2, must mean the restoration of the Church, immediately after the overthrow of Antichrist, and especially the restoration of the Jews; which coincides with that prediction of Israel's restoration and revival, under the gospel dispensation. In Isaiah xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." But some are to awake "to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This must refer to that high state of life and holiness which shall characterize the millennial state of the Church, and which the people of God shall experience in that period; and to the detestation in which iniquity, and the workers of iniquity, shall be held in that glorious state of the world. This part of the prophecy seems to harmonize with that remarkable prediction in Rev. xx. 4, 5, where John saw "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, living and reigning with Christ a thousand years." "This," he calls, "the first resurrection;" but he tells us, that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished;" which prediction evidently refers to the resurrection of the spirit of the martyrs of Christ in the millennial period of the Church, just as John the Baptist appeared in the spirit and power of Elias, and intimates that the spirit of the enemies of Christ, and of the followers of the beast, shall not again appear until the millennial period terminates, but they shall then rise

in the armies of Gog and Magog. In accordance with this, then—for both predictions refer to the same event—those who are here said to "awake to everlasting life" may refer to the multitudes that shall rise up in the spirit of the witnesses of Christ, in the glorious days of the millennium; and those who are represented as rising to shame and everlasting contempt, may refer either to the few wicked men who shall appear in the millennial period, in the spirit of the old persecuting system, but who shall be held in contempt and scorn; or to the enemies of the Church, who shall rise against her at the close of the millennium, but who shall be consigned to everlasting shame and destruction when Christ appears at the last judgment. In that glorious period of the Church, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, and the spirit and influence of the gospel of Christ shall be universal, many of those whom the world contemned, and despised, and persecuted shall be held in honourable remembrance, and shall rise in their successors, in the Church of Christ, as the heirs of eternal life; while the names of many whom the world worshipped as heroes, if not consigned to oblivion, shall be remembered with disgust and scorn; or if any shall be found rising up in their spirit, it shall be to shame and contempt.

But the language suggests another idea, which we would introduce here with caution, and which, in the present state of unfulfilled prophecy, we have no desire to push beyond the limits of probability—an idea, however, which appears to be strongly supported, both by analogy in God's procedure, and by striking example, viz., that, in that fearful crisis, so glorious to

Zion, but so ruinous to her enemies, when Christ shall appear for the destruction of Antichrist, and for the deliverance, and glory, and extension of his Church in the world, in order to show his matchless power, and grace the solemnity of his victory, he may literally awake many who sleep in the dust, and raise them from the dead, as he once did at the grand crisis of his death and resurrection. God often fulfils his predictions in the moral and in the natural world at the same time. When he comes forth in some striking display of his power, to effect some great change in the moral or spiritual condition of his Church, or of society, the natural world feels his presence, and responds to it. "When Israel went out of Egypt, the sea saw it and fled, Jordan was driven back." When he made the pomp and the pride of Egypt reel under the rod of his judgments, the very earth trembled under the stroke: "the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." The signs of Jerusalem's overthrow, and the scattering of the Jews, were seen both in the natural and in the moral world; and if the grand event of the redemption and regeneration of the Church, by the death and resurrection of Christ, was accompanied with the opening of the graves and the dead rising to life, may we not suppose that the grand crisis of the overthrow of Antichrist, and the introduction of the millennial glory of the Church, shall be attended with the literal as well as the moral fulfilment of this prediction! And that when Christ appears as a glorious and triumphant conqueror on the field of Armageddon, he shall raise to life many that sleep in the dust, as trophies of his conquest, and as a token of his complete

victory over the enemies of his Church. But the certainty of this can be known only by the accomplishment of the event.

But we are farther informed, that in that glorious period of the Church, the wise and the teachers of others, who had long been kept in obscurity, shall appear gloriously prominent: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." "The brightness of the firmament" refers to the unobscured light of the sun, and points out the prominent brightness of the character of those who are wise in spiritual and divine things, and who shall, in that period, be occupied in the glorious work of bringing men to Christ and salvation. They shall shine forth as bright stars, reflecting the light of the Sun of righteousness; and they shall not only shine forth, in directing and guiding Zion's travellers on their way to glory, but they shall shine in heaven for ever and ever. The whole figure points out the prominency, the faithfulness, and the unprecedented success of a gospel ministry in the millennial state of the Church. Long have these stars, which Christ holds in his right hand, been caricatured and dimmed to the eye of the world by the smoking torches of an Antichristian priesthood, and often clouded and obscured by a world's contempt; but in that glorious period the dimness shall be removed, and every Antichristian lamp shall be extinguished, and the stars of Christ's right hand shall shine forth in all the brilliancy of gospel truth, whose light shall scatter the darkness, and bring multitudes to the standard of the Saviour.

With this intimation Daniel is commanded to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end,"—meaning that no further disclosure was to be made regarding this prediction until "the time of the end," the period when an end was to be put to the Antichristian system in the world, and when the Church was to be delivered. This was an intimation that these words would not be fully understood until that period; and the prophecy is commanded to be shut up, because the time was long ere it was to be accomplished; because, although developed at the time of the prediction, it would not have been understood, and, consequently would have been of little advantage to the Church; and because it was only at the time of the end that men would search into the meaning of this prediction. When the end draws near, and the mystery of God is about to be finished, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." This is the characteristic of "the time of the end,"—the time when this prediction shall be fulfilled—when Antichrist shall be consumed, and the millennial glory of the Church approaching. There is nothing that fills the abettors of the Antichristian system with greater alarm than the diffusion of knowledge: and the reason is plain—knowledge is the enemy of that system, the deadly weapon drawn against it; hence the mighty efforts which Antichrist has ever made to prevent the spread or the increase of knowledge. In these countries where Antichrist wields his sceptre, the reading of the Word of God—that book of saving knowledge—is, even in the present day, counted criminal, and visited with the severest penalties. But as the time draws

near for his overthrow, "the words" shall be opened, and the book of God's predictions shall be unsealed, and there shall be a running to and fro among men, spreading knowledge from one spot of the world to another. This may refer to the facilities afforded to men in running from one spot of the earth to another, and carrying knowledge along with them; and to their conversing together, comparing opinions, and searching into the meaning of truths hitherto shut up and sealed, —the effect of which will be the increase of knowledge. Is not this prophetic description strikingly characteristic of our own times? Are these not the times of knowledge increasing? Has not the cry gone forth for UNIVERSAL EDUCATION? And is not this cry re-echoing from every class of human society? And are not the streams of knowledge issuing forth from every source of information, and widening and deepening in their progress, and threatening to inundate the very den of the Antichristian monster, and force him out to the light, to be destroyed and consumed?—evident tokens that "the time of the end" is not far distant.

VERSES 5–7.—"Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long *shall it be* to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter

the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished."

Hitherto Daniel had been standing in the presence of the angel who had been giving him the information contained in this prophecy, and also within view of the glorious personage who was seen standing above the river. But now there appeared to him other two, whom he had not before seen; most likely two of the angels of heaven who attend upon Jesus Christ in his dispensations toward his Church. They appeared standing one on each bank of the river, while the man clothed in linen stood between them. These angelic messengers seem to have made their appearance at this time, not only to render the vision illustrious, and by their presence, as two witnesses, to attest the truth of the discovery, but in their attendance upon their Lord, to obtain information regarding Christ's dispensations toward his Church; for the angels of heaven "learn from the Church the manifold wisdom of God;" and also to be the means of communicating further information to Daniel regarding the vision. Hence the question is put by one of these spirits to him who was clothed in linen—who, as we have already seen, was the Messiah—"How long shall it be to the end of those wonders?" The wonders to which the angel refers are the events predicted in the preceding part of the chapter, and they are of such a nature as to fill the very angels of heaven with wonder. They are "things which the angels desire to look into." The troubles of the Church, and her deliverance—the destruction of Antichrist, and the latter glory of the Church on earth, together with the mighty change which these events

shall produce in our world, are wonders which will strike men and angels with astonishment. The angel wishes information, both for himself and the prophet, regarding the time when these events shall be accomplished. He asks when the grand crisis shall happen. In verse 7, we have the answer which the man clothed in linen gave to the angel's question. The circumstances in which this answer was given demand our attention. 1. It was given in the hearing of the prophet Daniel. The angel who put the question received information from the answer; but it was given also that the prophet might receive instruction, and communicate it to the Church of Christ on earth. Angels receive information in the Church as onlookers, but the Church receives it as having a deep personal interest in it. 2. It was given in the form of an oath. This glorious personage who stood over the river held up his right hand and his left to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, regarding the truth of his statement;—regarding the time when all these wonders shall be accomplished—intimating that the period of Antichrist's reign, and the time of his overthrow and of the deliverance of the Church, are unalterably fixed in the eternal counsels of Heaven. And he informs his angels and his prophet, "that it shall be for a time, times, and a half"—that is, three *times*, or three years and an half—which, as we have formerly shown, are prophetic years, each day of which stands for a year. Three years and a half contain 1260 days, which, being interpreted, are 1260 years. This period of time was to bring these wonders to an end. There is a striking coincidence between this part of the vision and the

vision of John in Rev. x., where this same glorious personage is seen descending from heaven arrayed in a cloud, having the rainbow for his coronet, and his countenance beaming in solar splendour, and his feet burning as pillars of fire. John saw him set his one foot on the earth and the other on the sea, and he saw him in this position lifting up his hands to heaven, and swearing regarding the same thing, viz., the time of Antichrist's continuance. In Daniel's vision, he swears that this time shall be 1260 years, but in the vision of John he comes down to earth in majestic splendour to make preparation for the pouring out of the vials of his wrath, and he swears that this period is drawing to a close—"that time should be" given to it "no longer." Another circumstance is mentioned in his oath which marks the period of the termination of these wonders, viz., the scattering of the power of the holy people: "When he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." This seems to refer either to the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world, or to the persecutions and scattering of the people of God under the reign of the Antichristian system. When the Jewish dispersions are completed, in the providence of God, then the most remarkable events of this prophecy shall be fulfilled; or when Antichrist has done his worst in persecuting and scattering the people of God, "all these things shall be finished," or measures taken to bring them to an end. This prediction of the man clothed in linen is parallel with that which he gives us in Luke xxi. 24: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The restoration

of the Jews, as well as the deliverance and extension of the Gentile Church, are events foretold by the prophets, which shall be brought to pass in consequence of the overthrow of the Man of Sin. And we are here informed that when the process of scattering the people of God has reached its utmost limit, and the tide of restoration and deliverance is about to turn, all these events connected with the destruction of Antichristian systems shall be fulfilled, the reign of Antichrist shall be finished, the troubles and persecutions of the Church shall terminate, and the king of Zion shall raise up the tabernacle of David, and all his enemies shall be scattered.

VERSES 8–13.—"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall* be the end of these *things?* And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed *is* he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end *be:* for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Daniel heard this important prediction of the man clothed in linen, but he understood it not. He had now become familiar with prophetic declaration and prophetic symbols. A vast extent of prophetic narrative had passed before him in vision, and he had "heard the words and knew the knowledge of the Most High;" but this oath of Messiah, and his declaration regarding

the symbolic time, and the accomplished scattering of the holy people, he understood not—a decided evidence that the time mentioned was prophetic, and not literal, for had these predicted *times* been literal years, Daniel would have felt little difficulty in understanding it. But he was at a loss to know their meaning, and he puts the question to him who uttered the prediction; he asks information from Christ himself, and not from the angel that talked with him regarding the final issue of these events: "What shall be the end of these things?" The angel asked how long the time was to the end of these wonders; but Daniel asks information regarding the events themselves, and what should happen at the time of the end. The answer of the Messiah to this question of Daniel concludes this remarkable prophecy; and with this answer he dismisses Daniel from any further attendance upon the prophetic vision at that time, and bids him be content for the present with what he had already seen and heard: "Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Daniel is here commanded to retire to the duties of his ordinary business, to record what he had seen and heard, and to wait patiently for the further development of the prediction in God's time; and he is informed that the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end—intimating, not only that no further revelation of this matter was to be given at this time, but that the full meaning of what had already been predicted was not to be understood, and could not be interpreted, "till the time of the end." The words were closed up for the time being from any further development, that

being both unintelligible and unnecessary to the Church under that intervening period. But they were also sealed, to show that their accomplishment was certain, and that the seal would be opened, and their meaning revealed at "the time of the end;" that is, at the time when these predictions are about to be accomplished—the time when all those systems opposing the Church of Christ shall be brought to an end—the time when "the indignation shall be accomplished" (chapter ix. 36), and the time when Christ swears "that time was to be allowed to these opposing systems no longer." (Rev. x. 6.) Then shall the seal be broken, the words opened, and their meaning revealed and understood. Until that time, Daniel is informed that "many shall be purified, and made white, and tried." The same prediction, which we have in chapter xi. 35, and which refers to the effects of persecution upon the Church of Christ, viz., the advancement of holiness and Christian principle under the overruling providence of God, who makes the wrath of man to praise him. But while the righteous shall advance in holiness and purity, under trials and persecution, "the wicked shall do wickedly, and shall not understand:" they shall continue in ignorance and go on in sin, which will be both their sin and their punishment. But it shall be the character and the privilege of the wise that they shall understand, while the wicked are blind and ignorant regarding the meaning of God's procedure. This part of the prediction seems to intimate that, as "the time of the end" approaches, there shall appear a marked distinction, not only in the knowledge of the righteous and the wicked, but also of their character and position in the

world. There will be a gradual and prominent development of their different characters, each taking their side in preparation for "the day of the Lord in the valley of decision." The same idea we have in the close of the Book of Revelation: "He that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is holy let him be holy still;" that is, when the time is at hand, and the seal of the prophecy is to be opened. (Rev. xxii. 11.)

But Daniel is farther informed by the man clothed in linen—the Messiah—regarding the time of Antichrist's reign. From the time of the taking away of the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of the abomination of desolation, to the time of the end, or to the time when these things shall be finished, shall be 1290 days. The taking away of the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, as formerly noticed, refers, in the first instance, to Antiochus prohibiting the worship of the Jews at Jerusalem, and setting up the image of Jupiter in the temple of God, and the 1260 or 1290 days marked the literal time of the continuance of these troubles to the Jews. But we have also seen that all this was the figure or the symbol of the interruption of the pure Christian worship in the Church of Christ, and the setting up of the desolating abomination of Antichrist, under the New Testament dispensation, and of the prophetic time of its continuance, viz., 1260 or 1290 years. On no other principle can the various parts of the prediction in this chapter be understood. The Messiah informs Daniel here, that from the time of the setting up of the desolating abomination of Antichrist, in the New Testament Church, until "the time of the

end," or "to the end of these wonders," or to "the time when all these things shall be finished," shall be 1290 prophetic days—that is, 1290 years; and he pronounces him blessed who "waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days"—that is, 45 years more. The great difficulty with which commentators have to contend here—a difficulty which, perhaps, will be found insurmountable until "the time of the end" shall break open the seal of the book, and disclose the words—is to find the exact time of the commencement of these periods. Some understand the three periods mentioned in this chapter—viz., 1260, 1290, and 1335 days—to begin at different times, and to have all the same termination; but it rather appears, from the structure of the language, that they commence at the same point of time, and have different terminations—that is, the 1290 is just the period of 1260, with 30 years additional, and the 1335 is a period of 45 years more than the 1290. Now, the Saviour tells Daniel that this period commenced at the time of the suppression of the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, which, we have seen, has a prophetic reference to the time when the institutions and the worship of the Christian Church were corrupted by the setting up of the desolating abominations of Antichrist; but the difficulty is to find the exact time when that was done. Several times have been fixed on as the time when Antichrist was thus developed in the Church, but the latest period upon which we find commentators have fixed, is the year 606, the time when the Pope was declared Universal Bishop, which makes the period of 1260 prophetic days to terminate

in 1866, and the 1290 days to end in 1896, and the 1335 days to run out to 1941. We have endeavoured to show, in another treatise,* that, agreeable to analogy in God's procedure, this prophetic period may have different times of commencement, and, consequently, different corresponding periods of termination—that is, the 1260 years may mark the period between a certain point or step in the rise of Antichrist, and the corresponding step in his fall, just as the 70 years' captivity in Babylon had three different periods of commencement, and three corresponding periods in its termination—that is, three different captivities, and three different and corresponding returns. May we not suppose, then, in accordance with this, that these three periods mentioned here, may each have their different points in the rise and progress of Antichrist, and also their corresponding periods in his downfall? and the last, pointing out the time of the full and final overthrow of the system, when the blessing here predicted shall be realized by the Church of Christ? One termination, at least, of this prophetic period is expressly pointed out in the 11th chapter of the Book of Revelation. There we find it terminating at the slaying and resurrection of the witnesses, and the sounding of the seventh trumpet; and as this was also the introduction of the pouring out of the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the Antichristian system, and as these vials have evidently been discharging their contents upon that system for years past, we have reason to hope that the other different periods of their termination are drawing to a close, and that that period is approaching

* Lectures on Revelation, chap. xiii.

which shall bring glorious days to the Church of Christ. We are disposed to view the killing and resurrection of Christ's witnesses as past many years ago, in all probability about the year 1688,* and the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath upon Antichrist nearly completed, and, consequently, these prophetic periods have elapsed, at least in one point of their termination; but as it is difficult to find the exact time of their commencement, or to calculate the exact number of years that may be required to fill up the different prophetic periods, and as the period of 1260 years does not mark the term of the existence of Antichrist, but the period of his reign, which has evidently terminated long ago, we believe that the attentive observer of God's providence, in the light of his predictions, will attain a more accurate view of the time of the approaching crisis, by discerning the signs of the times, than by calculating prophetic years, about whose commencement there has always been found so great diversity of opinion. If the 1260 or 1290 years mark the period of the *reign*, or universal despotism, of Antichrist—and this is plain from the prediction of God in the Book of the Revelation—then we have no specified period mentioned in prophecy which marks the termination of his *existence*. After his *reign*, or after the period of 1260 years, the vials had to be poured out, in order to waste and consume him to the end, and the termination of these can only be known by observing the signs or tokens of God's providence. Christ, indeed, here mentions other two periods subsequent to the termination of the persecuting reign of Antichrist, but he does not say what

* Lectures on Revelation, chap. xi.

is to happen at the close of either. He only says, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the" last of these—"the 1335 days;" evidently showing that each of these periods marks a point farther advanced in the process of the destruction of Antichrist, and nearer the latter glory of the Church on earth, and that the man who arrives at that last point, where he is within view of the glorious day of the New Jerusalem, is blessed.*

The Church and the people of God are, therefore, not to be disappointed, although these prophetic periods seem to be run out, and yet the predicted consequence

* If the slaying and resurrection of the witnesses occurred, as already stated, about the year 1688—and the events of that time certainly bear the nearest resemblance to their death and resurrection of any that are upon record—then the 1260 years of Antichrist's reign, referred to in the Revelation and in this prophecy, terminated at that time (see Rev. xi.), and, consequently, the whole of these three prophetic periods mentioned in this last chapter of Daniel are closed, and we have entered upon "the time of the end," that is, the period when God is hastening the things here predicted to an end. But if, like Israel's captivity in Babylon, that period of 1260 days had different beginnings, at different steps of the rise and reign of Antichrist, then it must have different corresponding terminations, and, of course, the date of these terminations must be beyond the year 1688, and may reach near to the termination of Antichrist's existence; but in whatever way we make the calculation, when we consider the time that has elapsed since the appearance of Antichrist in the world, and when we look at the aspect of the present times, in the light of these prophetic declarations, we cannot fail to see that we are approaching the fearful crisis here predicted—a crisis utterly ruinous to every Antichristian system, but eminently glorious to the Church of God.

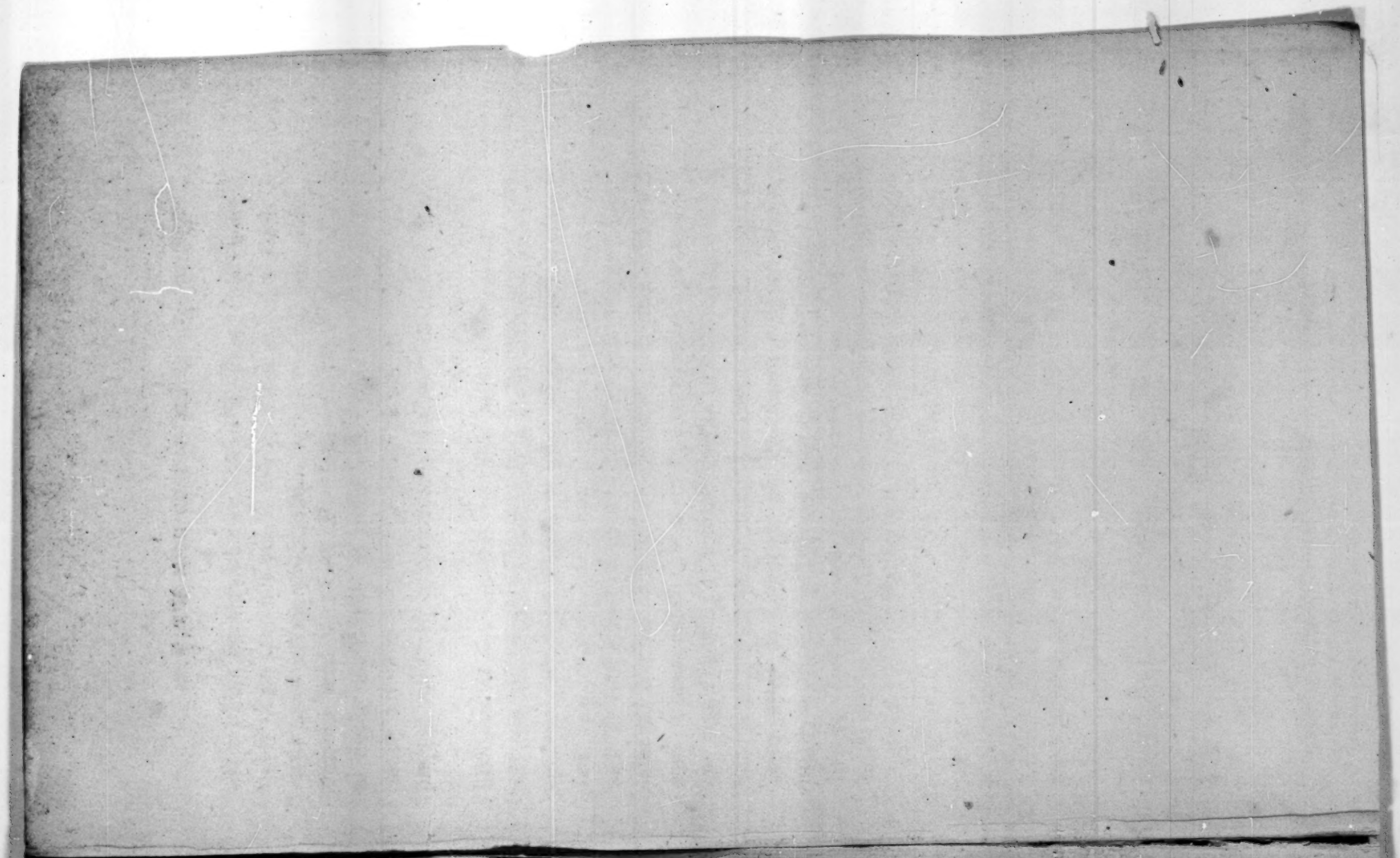
unfulfilled. They are not to suppose that God is slack concerning his promise, although the 1260 years have elapsed, or even the 1335 years are run out, and yet Antichrist is still existing, and the glory of the Church not yet fully developed. We must bear in mind that great events are not accomplished in one day, nor are predicted consequences fully developed immediately at the time specified in the prediction, but that the predicted time often marks only the commencement of the fulfilment of the event predicted. Of this we have a striking example in the events of the seventh trumpet, in Rev. xi. When the seventh angel sounded, we are told that "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ." Now, it is evident that this was only the commencement of the fulfilment of that prediction, or the announcement of the preparation making for such a glorious event; for the seven vials of God's wrath had to be poured out upon Antichrist, to consume and destroy him, ere that glorious state of the world could be fully developed. And in the prediction here under consideration, these prophetic periods are said to reach to "the time of the end;" not to the full development of the predicted event, the complete overthrow of Antichrist and the full display of the glory of the Church, but to the time when these events take place, which shall issue in the full development of the "end" predicted, when the execution of God's judgments shall bring to an end the Man of Sin, and shall issue in the glory and extension of the Church of Christ.

In conclusion, Daniel having received that informa-

tion regarding God's future dispensations with which he and the Church must for the time be satisfied, is commanded to "go his way till the end be." He was to receive no more information at that time on this point, for the full development of the prophecy was reserved till the time of its accomplishment draws near; but he was to rest and stand in his lot at the end of the days. The revelations made to him were now brought to a close, and the years of his existence in this world were drawing to an end. At this time he must have been at least ninety years of age, and the time was drawing near when he must die, but the blessing of *rest* is promised him. He was to enter into the rest in glory, which remains for the people of God; while his body would rest in the grave, in the hope of a glorious resurrection, and at the end of the days he is "to stand in his lot," to occupy the place that God has assigned him—which some understand to be his place among the redeemed at the resurrection of the just, while others think it refers to the place which his prophecies shall hold among other predictions, at "the time of the end," or of their fulfilment. In both cases this prophet will doubtless stand in his lot. But if there is to be a literal resurrection of many that sleep in the dust, at that glorious period of Christ's victory over the enemies of Zion—an idea, the probability of which we have already hinted, although not affirmed—may it not be rationally supposed, that Daniel may be among those who have part in this "first resurrection," and that the words here refer to the position which he shall occupy among them? This, however, the day only will declare.

The following remarks are deducible from this view of the chapter:—1. Amid the judgments that God inflicts upon his enemies in this world, the Church and people of God may be exposed to great troubles. 2. In the greatest calamities, Christ watches over and protects his own people. 3. In the resurrection, the position of the righteous and the wicked will be widely and awfully different. 4. The gracious reward and high honour which God will at last bestow upon all his faithful servants will be in some measure according to their work on earth. 5. The time of the latter glory of the Church shall be a time of extensive knowledge. 6. Jesus Christ, in his administration in the Church, is attended by angels. 7. In the administration of the affairs of his Church, Christ occupies a different position from that of angels. 8. Christ's dispensations toward his Church are the wonder and the study of the angels of heaven. 9. Christ's dispensations toward his Church are known to angels, only so far as he is pleased to reveal them. 10. God's promises of deliverance to his Church, although certain in their accomplishment, are sometimes fulfilled at the last extremity—when the power of the holy people is scattered. 11. The most intelligent men in the Church are often at a loss to understand divine things. 12. Communion with Christ in the present state is comparatively short, and often interrupted. 13. God reveals his mind to us at the time and in the way that he pleases. 14. The troubles of the Church tend to purify the righteous, but to harden the wicked. 15. Knowledge and ignorance of God's will are two distinguishing characteristics of the godly and the sinner. 16. God has a set

time fixed for the events of his providence, and for the termination of the troubles of his Church. 17. When that time arrives, it will abundantly recompense those who have waited for it. 18. God's faithful servants and people, although they have to leave their place in the Church on earth, have a rest prepared for them, and a glorious position to be occupied by them, beyond the present scene.

Seeing, then, that these predictions are so eventful to the Church, that their truth is confirmed by the oath of Him who is Lord of angels, that their accomplishment is hastening on and drawing near, and that the present aspect of God's providence and of the world is pointing, with an index that cannot be mistaken, to that solemn and arousing declaration, "THE TIME IS AT HAND," what manner of persons ought we to be? Ought not every one, "who reads or hears the words of this prophecy," to be found at ~~their~~ his post, waiting and watching, and occupying a position upon that foundation which is laid in Zion, which will ensure an entrance into rest, and standing in their lot at the end of the days?

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